

HARCOURT.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF THE MYSTERIOUS WIFE, &c.

“ Dishonour waits on perfidy. The villain
“ Shou’d blush to think a falsehood: ’Tis the crime
“ Of cowards.”

JOHNSON.

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HARCOURT.



CHAP. I.

SIR Archibald Mackenzie had tried to compose, while he was dressing, an harangue suitable to the occasion of his visit to Mr. Douglas, and conned it over during his short drive; as Sir Charles did not break in upon his reverie, for he was enjoying, in imagination, the idea of seeing this narrow-minded, selfish, unfeeling, not to say dishonest, guardian of his friend humbling himself before the pupil he had gloried in ill-treating. As he

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alighted,

alighted, he enquired, "Where is Mr. Douglas?"

"In the library, Sir," was the answer.

Sir Charles preceded the Knight to the door, but then requested him to walk forward, enjoying his downcast penitential looks, and the effect his unexpected appearance would have upon Douglas.

Sir Archibald entered with slow and solemn steps, demonstrative of the importance of his errand, and sincerity of his contrition for his son's offence. Upon a large sofa, near the fire, lay the person he came to visit. The Knight bowed three times during his progress, and once still more respectfully, when arrived within three paces of the couch. As his compliment met with no return, in a trembling accent he began to express his grief; and Charles, who stood peeping in the background, wondered his friend did not rise, but upon a nearer approach, perceived he was fast asleep. The
Knight's



Knight's eye-sight being very much impaired, and the lights standing at a considerable distance, preventing him from making the same discovery, he continued, for near five minutes, expatiating upon his regret, despair, sorrow, contrition, &c. &c. protesting he almost doubted whether Lady Mackenzie would survive the shock the horrid discovery had given her, and offering to add the excuses of every individual of his family to those of the miserable Archy, if that could induce Mr. Douglas to overlook his unheard-of assurance.

Finding he had nearly concluded his pathetic appeal to his friend's feelings, the Baronet stopped his torrent of eloquence, by remarking, in a low voice, that Mr. Douglas was asleep; and motioning for him to follow him out of the room, he was forced to retire, inexpressibly mortified to find so sublime a composition should have been thus rendered of no avail, and not even daring to request the Baronet would wake his friend, as that might

be far more likely to exasperate than conciliate the young gentleman; and, as Sir Charles had his doubts whether this sleepy fit was not assumed, he did not make the proposal, but advised the Knight to renew his visit to Mr. Douglas in the course of the forenoon at Durham House; assuring him he would repeat, as nearly as he could recollect, all he had said in extenuation of his son's misdemeanor, which would, no doubt, have its proper weight with his friend.

So kind a promise rather revived the Knight's spirits, who took his leave with a thousand acknowledgments of Sir Charles's great goodness, and set out on foot (as Sir Charles had not ordered his carriage to wait) to give his better half an account of his unsuccessful embassy. Sir Charles ran back into the library the moment he had got rid of him, and found his friend in the same position they had left him; therefore no longer presumed he had feigned sleep, to avoid listening to, or answering the penitent Knight,

Knight, and thought his friend could not have given a greater proof of the benefit of real courage, and a clear conscience. He stood contemplating his tranquil slumbers for a quarter of an hour ; but reflecting that he would be infinitely better in bed (as there was no longer any occasion for him to meet his antagonist), he began to shake him.—Douglas opened his eyes, saying, “ Zounds ! Charles, what a time you have been gone ! I seem to have taken a comfortable night’s rest.—What’s the hour ? ”

“ Near five,” replied the Baronet, laughing. “ How could you sleep so sound upon the eve of fighting a duel ? ”

“ I believe in predestination, Charles ;—besides, is it in human nature that any man can fear meeting a notorious coward ? But have you seen my brave antagonist ? I presume, from the time you have been gone, he was not at home.”

“ Indeed he was, and almost as sound asleep as you were, till I awoke him.”

"Then I am sure sleeping in the hour of danger is no sign of courage," interrupted Douglas.

"Oh but he thought the danger all over."

"Well, but does the blustering fool mean to meet me, after giving us all this trouble?"

"I am convinced he never had such a bloodthirsty intention; but permit me to repeat all that has passed since we parted—for believe me, I took every precaution to prevent his retreating honourably from his appointment;" taking up his recital from his arrival in Leicester-square, and bringing it down to the Knight's recent departure from Piccadilly. Douglas insisted the conclusion was a fabrication of his own, till Sir Charles seriously declared it was downright matter of fact, and repeated the heads of the Knight's doleful ditty, as he termed his fine speech.—Douglas joined him in a very hearty laugh, protesting chance seemed determined to afford him continual opportunities to retaliate upon this unfeeling family; and he took leave of the Baronet, after making him promise to breakfast with him at one o'clock at Durham

ham House, that he might be present during the Knight's intended visit.

Meanwhile, Sir Archibald hastened home, and was let in by my Lady, who hardly allowed herself time to open the door, before she exclaimed, "Weel, my dear, have ye seen the gude young mon, and have ye prevailed on him to accept the dastardly rascal's excuse?"

"I have some hopes he will, as Sir Charles Creighton, who seems to be a man of very large fortune, has promised to represent every thing in the most favourable light to Mr. Douglas, whom I have seen, to be sure, but not to much effect."

"Ah! my dear, I have been repenting ever sin ye have been gone, that I did nae accompany ye; I would nae have left the noble youth's feet till he had promised tull bury the whole affair in oblivion! Ye never express yoursel with propriety; ye should have been aw humility—he is nae doubt drunk with his own greatness! Do ye ken there is ainly an auld, infirm, half-cheeldish, weak mon between him

and the first Dukedom in Scotland? Mercy upon me, ye should have approached him with the same awe and reverence ye would have done yere Maker, and between every three words ye should have popped in *noble Sir*, and *generous Sir*, with sitch like expressions, not forgetting to lay due stress upon the auncient name of Douglas, and have cawed him the pride of the noblest clan in aw Scotland, the most renowned for their clemency and humanity, and aw that. Oh! I wish I could have given ye a few hints before ye set oot, but I could nae leave Sir Charles, wha's acquaintance and mediation was nae to be neglected: but pray, above all, sin ye say ye did see him, though I am afraid ye did mair harm than gude, what did ye think of the likeness?"

"If you was not so fond of hearing yourself talk, Lady Mackenzie, I should be able to answer some of your questions; I have no doubt but you would have done wonders, had you been there, and I wish you had gone, since mine has proved a fruitless errand;

errand; though, I must own, I still entertain hopes all may end well. Mr. Douglas was at Sir Charles's when we arrived there, but had fallen asleep while waiting for his friend's return; and the Baronet did not chuse to wake him, though he undertook to say every thing likely to bring the dispute to an amicable issue."

"The Lord be praised, my dear! Mr. Douglas was very likely rather in liquor himself, and it was prudent of Sir Charles nae to disturb him, for very few people are good-tempered when woke, particularly, ye ken, if they were at aw intoxicated when they fell asleep; but the likeness, my dear, the likeness—you did nae tell me whether he still reminded you of that vagrant Harcourt?"

"Asleep, and as he lay, I can't say it was so perceptible."

"As I said at the time, we were aw beside oursel; ye who are sae accustomed to take likenesses must have seen if sitch a resemblance continued, sleeping or waking. I ainly hope this disagreeable business will nae

come to John's ears ; Archy shall accompany ye into St. James's-square in the morning, so let us gang and try tull get a leetle rest ;— though I have been sae flurried, I nae expect to sleep much."

It was however decreed they should not get any repose, as they had scarcely composed themselves before they were once more roused by Mr. Merry, whom a thirst for revenge had kept awake, and who was come to summon Archy to accompany him to the Park two hours before the appointed time. Particularly exasperated against this meddling lawyer, they both hurried down to forbid him their house, and vent their spleen upon him for having led their son, and consequently themselves, into such a dilemma.

Merry was startled at this unexpected reception, and still more so to learn Douglas had proposed to meet Archy, as it defeated all his well-laid schemes of vengeance. He affected to talk big, but Lady Mackenzie

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was not the dupe of his blustering airs; and he left the house nearly as much mortified as when he escaped from the horsewhips of the Duke's servants, convinced it was no longer in his power even to gratify his spite by propagating that Douglas was afraid to give Archy the meeting, and that prudence required him, notwithstanding the disgrace attending the transaction, to put up with the treatment he had met with in silence. The Knight and his Lady made no more attempts to repair their want of rest; but having dressed themselves, sat talking over past events, and the late affair, till they were joined by Margaret, and soon after ten, by Archy, whom her Ladyship, as she observed, now saw to advantage; the blotches already mentioned, struck her at first sight, as they had done before, to be dirt, and she desired him to wash his face before he presumed to sit down to breakfast in her presence. An explanation took place, and Archy endeavoured to persuade both father and mother that it was owing to those marks he had been

prevailed upon to send the challenge to Mr. Douglas.

“ And ye did nothing to provoke the noble fellow to endeavour to burn yere eyes out ?” said his mother.

“ Not to his knowledge,” Archy swore.

“ If I did nae think it necessary ye should gang tull Durham House with yere father, to make aw the atonement in yere power (which is little enough, considering all things) for yere abominable behaviour, ye should leave my house this moment, and never darken my doors again as long as I live. Ye even to cane fitch a mon’s servants was the greatest atrocity I ever heard of; but to croon aw, ye must attempt to strike the master, before whom ye ought never to have stood upright, had ye kenned yere own interest ! I ainly wish he had inflicted a ten times severer punishment upon ye ; however, eat yere breakfast, and then make haste and dress ye tull accompany Sir Archibald, ye pure, dastardly fapscull ! I have sent yere friend Merry

(who was come to lead ye into some other folly) away with a flea in his ear; and if I ken ye ever hold ony future converse with that fellow, why ye will take the consequence."

Archy, who dared not say too much, conscious his talents would procure him but a sorry livelihood, only growled out, "he did not intend to have any thing more to say to Merry, who was ten times more to blame than himself; he however would make his fortune through the business."

"Mar it, ye mean, dolter head!"

Archy explained upon what foundation he had made his assertion; adding, "If I was in Merry's place, I would not take less than ten thousand pounds damages; and I should not wonder if he got twenty, as the old Duke is reported to be very rich."

"I ainly wish ye had received yere share of the horfewhipping! Damages, forsooth, fitch a paltry fellow as Merry sue the Duke
of

of Durham for damages ; like ye sot, he was pot valiant last night, but is quiet enough this morning ; and ye, ye stupid, lazy loon, to think ye could fight a duel ? Why now ye are sober (in yere senses ye ne'er will be, for a greater fule does nae exist), but now ye dare as weel run yere thick scull into the fire, as face Mr. Douglas. I am seldom mistaken in the judgment I form of ony one's character, and I ought to be pretty well acquainted with yere disposition ; and I ken ye are the greatest coward in the world, and aw sitch reptiles are bullies : had ye gone into the field, your teeth would have chattered in yere jaws, and ye could nae have held yere pistol straight. Oh ! had ye and Merry had to do with some great men who would have pleaded their privilege, how ye would both have swaggered ! Ye neither of ye thought the Honourable Mr. Douglas would lower himsel so far as to level a pistol at yere thick heads ; but ye have found yere mistake—if he had nae have killed ye, ye would have died of the fright. I hardly ken why

why yere father and me have taken sitch pains to save sitch a usefess being—so now, Archy, mind me, ye are going into St. James's-square, where I expect ye will gang upon yere marrow bones, and thank the noble fellow for having taken the trouble to correct ye for yere atrocious insolence, and promise never to be guilty of the like again."

Archy by no means approved of asking pardon, considering himself, as he did, the offended person, but found he had no alternative; he must either submit to the humiliation, or turn his back upon home for ever. Mr. Douglas, her Ladyship declared, had acted perfectly right, and had proved himself a man of spirit and honour throughout the whole affair; he was Johnny's best friend, and it behoved them all to pay the utmost court both to him and the Duke, whom Archy had also contrived to offend: but she foresaw he would never rise, except he came to be hanged!

"I wish, with all my soul," cried the Knight, "I had not left Piccadilly till I had spoken

spoken to Mr. Douglas, and obtained his permission to take this surly, unthankful wretch with me into St. James's-square; for he will make his excuses in such an ungracious manner, that ten to one they will be construed into a fresh insult."

"Would he dare, my dear? If he nae behaves with aw due humility and reverence, nae let him shew his face again in Leicester-square—that's aw I have to say, Mr. Archy; see if yere impudence will supply ye with bread and cloaths—ye shall gang naked, ye lazy, idle vagabond; ye never earned salt tull yere porridge yet; ye, Sir Archibald, that have toiled and worked early and late to support this worthless loon, may be brought to public disgrace and shame through his follies. However, gang yere gait this moment, ye sorry varlet, and get ready tull attend yere father."

Knowing any further remonstrances would be vain, he left the room; and during his absence, her Ladyship gave her husband his
full

full instructions, observing Archy need only bow in unison with his discourse. The moment he once more made his appearance, a hackney-coach was sent for, and her Ladyship continued to enforce her instructions to both father and son, when, without a previous knock, as the footboy had left the door upon the jar, John entered the parlour.

“Mercy upon me, my dear bairn !” exclaimed her Ladyship ; “ wha would have expected ye thus early ; sure in God, I vow I dread to ask what brought ye !”

“ Your son Archibald, Ma’am,” replied John very calmly.

“ There, ye sorry loon, ye find yere last night’s folly is town-talk. Oh my dear Johnny ! ye cannae be mair angry with him than I am ; yere father did think of coming tull ye to ask yere advice, ainly he was afraid of deranging ye : but what have ye heard, my bairn ?”

“ That your hopeful son, Ma’am, chose to shew himself at Ranelagh last night, so disguised

guised in liquor, that he was literally unable either to speak intelligibly, or stand upright ; and when coming away, took it into his head to quarrel with Mr. Douglas's servants, and refused to let their master's carriage advance, till a hackney-coach, which he and another blackguard had in waiting, drew up. Not contented with thus rendering himself the object of the public attention and abuse, nor with striking Mr. Douglas's servants, he chose also to make an attempt to cane that gentleman himself—an insult he deservedly paid pretty dear for at the moment ; and had you never risen after he had knocked you down, you stupid being, I should have heard the news with comparative pleasure to what I felt when I learned you were able to belch out, " Satisfaction ;" accompanying your demand with the most opprobrious epithets ;—and as if you were fearful you might escape at least unknown, proclaimed yourself the son of Sir Archibald Mackenzie, in the hearing of Sir Charles Creighton, Colonel Frazer, the Marquis of Beuifort's servants, and

and five hundred more belonging to various noblemen and gentlemen, who no doubt reported your heroism in the most favourable terms to their respective families."

"Oh Heavens!" cried the Knight, "I shan't have a friend left soon."

"Not you indeed, Sir Archibald," quoth John, with the most provoking composure.

At this moment the hackney-coach drove up, and her Ladyship said, "E'en get ye gone, Sir Archibald, or ten to one ye will nae find Mr. Douglas at home."

"Why where are you going, Sir?"

"To Durham House, John, with the worthless being in my hand, who shall kiss the ground Mr. Douglas treads upon, if nothing less will obliterate his last night's behaviour from his memory."

"And do you flatter yourself you will be received, Sir? Though I am happy to find you are sensible of the necessity there is for your apologizing to Mr. Douglas, as well as your son, since he thought proper to threaten that gentleman in your name."

"Oh

“ Oh my dear Johnny !” said her Ladyship, “ ye might be sure I would take every likely means to deprecate both the wrath of the Duke of Durham as well as yere generous patron ; for I vow I dread the former upon your account, more than I do Mr. Douglas. My bairn, I would undertake impossibilities mysel ; I would fling mysel at the feet of both, and never rise till I had obtained their pardon, rather than ye should be a sufferer ; though I would nae stir a step tull save the drunken wretch from Newgate ; but I have great hopes aw will end better than he deserves, for Sir Charles Creighton has promised to stand our friend.”

“ Sir Charles Creighton ! why, when and where did you see him ?”

This question brought on a farther explanation, which rendered John all but raving ; and hardly knowing what he did, he determined to convince his kind friend how sensible he was of the repeated insults he had received, without meaning to attempt to excuse his
brother.

brother. He snatched up his hat, saying, "Come along, Sir Archibald—come along, you stupid, boasting, cowardly rascal, though I don't entertain the smallest hope of being admitted," leading the way without paying the least attention to his mother, who followed him with her thanks and prayers till the coach drove off.

No one spoke during their short ride.—John chose to alight and knock himself, desiring his father and brother would wait in the coach till he sent for them, in case he was received. He could not have made them a more agreeable proposal, and felt exceedingly happy himself upon being immediately shewn into Douglas's dressing-room, who was just risen, and laughing over the adventures of the preceding evening with Sir Charles, who had the moment before joined him. Instantly guessing John's business and consequent feelings, he rose to meet him, and shook him with more than usual cordiality by the hand, saying, "How are you this morning?"

morning? Come, do be seated.—What, I suppose you have heard of the silly nonsense that occurred upon my departure from Ranelagh? For Heaven's sake don't look so grave, for I am sure I was as much to blame as your brother, to attend to what he said, inebriated as he was; so no apologies I request. I was very sorry your father paid me such an useless visit last night."

John tried to express his thanks, and mentioned his father and brother being below.

"Upon any other occasion I should be happy to receive any relations of your's, my friend, but I can't think of giving them the trouble to alight now; so pray present my compliments to Sir Archibald, and assure him I had consigned the whole affair to oblivion before your arrival; and then, if you are not particularly engaged, return and breakfast with Sir Charles and me. I hope your brother has not been a very material sufferer; a moment's reflection would certainly

tainly have made me chuse some other weapon."

" I trust you will give me credit, Sir, when I assure you both my father, mother, and myself think the punishment he met with very inadequate to his insolence ; but with your leave I will step down to my father, who positively has not enjoyed a moment's peace since he learned how shamefully you have been treated by a son he was almost ready to renounce."

" Then pray make haste, and request, in my name, a general amnesty may be proclaimed on all sides."

John hurried away to impart his kind friend's wishes to his father ; and though Sir Archibald was rather mortified at not being received, the joyful tidings perfectly reconciled him to his, in some respect, agreeable disappointment. Archy, though inwardly as much rejoiced as his father, affected once more to bluster, saying, " Mr. Douglas
knew

knew he was most to blame, and consequently had most right to ask pardon."

The Knight, perceiving John's anger rising, put down the front glass, and ordered the coachman home again, which induced the former to return into the house, contenting himself with shaking his head at his brother, who underwent a very severe lecture from his father, and a still more severe one from his mother, after she had, to her infinite satisfaction, learned the success of their embassy; who vowed he should turn out, provided for or not, if ever he offended in the like manner again, and called down repeated blessings upon her eldest son's head, to whom she wholly attributed the undeserved lenity the noble Mr. Douglas had shewn the ungrateful culprit.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

JOHN, having taken his leave in far better spirits than he had entered Durham House, Douglas and Sir Charles joined the Duke, who had lain in bed much later than usual, owing to a cold ; and not being able to sleep when he first retired, Mr. Merry's *carmagnole* was still uppermost in his mind, and his first enquiry was, " Whether Archy had sent any other message or note ?" Sir Charles undertook to relate the events of the night in so ludicrous a manner, that the Duke laughed very heartily, and agreed his dear George had acted very right, all things considered, though Mackenzie was certainly beneath his

notice: indeed he held the whole family, John excepted, in the most sovereign contempt. Having engaged Sir Charles to dine with him and his nephew, the two friends agreed to take a ride in Hyde-Park for an hour. The morning was fine, and the Park crowded with equestrians and pedestrians. Upon reaching the upper end, just as they were turning about, they descried Mrs. Shenstone, and four young ladies taking the air in Kensington-Gardens, among whom were Lady Isabella Kinross and Albertine. The latter no sooner saw Douglas, than she beckoned him to join them. For the first time he gladly obeyed her summons, though he perceived Mrs. Shenstone was neither pleased with the young lady nor with his dismounting, which he instantly did, as well as Sir Charles, and advanced towards this bevy of beauties, as they might truly be called. -

Mrs. Shenstone received them very politely, notwithstanding her chagrin, as she
by

by no means thought two such elegant fashionable young men proper companions for her pupils ; still, as Douglas was Albertine's guardian, she could not, with any degree either of prudence or politeness, treat him or his companion with reserve. Having paid their compliments in a general way to the young ladies, they all walked forward together, till Mrs. Shenstone, conscious she could no otherwise dismiss these intruders, observed it grew late, and proposed retiring. Albertine declared they had not been in the gardens ten minutes, and reminded her *chaperone* she had talked of walking for an hour. The gentlemen perfectly understood the hint, and Douglas instantly said, looking at Sir Charles, " We must also hurry home, or we shall miss our friend."

This intimation had the desired effect, while Douglas endeavoured, by his looks, to convince Lady Isabella why he joined the party, and why he thus abruptly meant to leave them, as he could not find an oppor-

tunity to exchange a word with her, unheard by Mrs. Shenstone, next to whom her Ladyship walked, who, with that restlessness, the characteristic of her age in such tantalizing situations, took an orange out of her pocket, complaining the heat made her very dry.—Mrs. Shenstone told her she ate too many. Douglas thought they were particularly wholesome during the Spring; though perhaps, from being remarkably fond of them, he was apt to fancy them very medicinal.

“These are some of the best I ever met with,” rejoined her Ladyship.

“I really think those we bought the other day in Piccadilly far preferable,” said Albertine. “Don’t you, Ma’am?” addressing Mrs. Shenstone.

“I can’t say I did,” was the reply.—“At all events, her Ladyship is to be commended for dealing in Mount-street, since Mrs. Macallister married out of her grandmother’s family.”

“Indeed!” thought Douglas; “I must endeavour to get acquainted with the
good

good woman," but dared not hint his intentions of becoming her customer, lest his real cause might be suspected; and having reached the small gate at which their grooms and horses waited, they took leave of the party.

Sir Charles was eloquent in his praise of the Scotch lassie, and asked Douglas whether she did not improve upon acquaintance.

"I have had so few opportunities of conversing with her, that I am hardly a fair judge; and as I have never been properly introduced, I don't think I ever shall."

"Why I am of opinion Mrs. Shenstone thought either you or me had some sinister design, by her violent haste; but I suppose she has received very strict charges concerning Lady Isabella Kinrofs. Many men are, no doubt, upon the look-out for such a valuable prize."

"You don't mean to increase their number?" enquired Douglas.

“No, upon my soul; I can admire her beauty as I should a sister's, and with no other sentiment than that sort of pleasure every man feels when in presence of a remarkably handsome woman; for I don't mean, except I alter my mind very strangely, to marry these ten years, and I dare say her Ladyship won't be inclined either to wait that time, or to part with her liberty in my favour, admitting she did.”

Douglas secretly hoped he should be able to induce her Ladyship to bestow herself upon him before the expiration of as many months, but did not chuse to take his best friend into his confidence as yet, determined to employ the most judicious means to make a friend of Mrs. Macallister. This project he also kept to himself, and even conversed upon indifferent subjects with such apparent unconcern, that Sir Charles was completely his dupe: and as Douglas did not mention to the Duke their having seen Mrs. Shensstone, he chose to follow his example. They were

were reasoning over the bottle upon some recent changes which had taken place in French politics, when the groom of the chambers informed Douglas a lady, whom he had shewn into the library, entreated to see him for a few minutes.

“ This is an unexpected favour,” he replied, laughing while he spoke ; “ who is the lady ?”

“ I really can't say, Sir ; she does not speak English, but has brought an interpreter with her.”

“ Well, this is still more curious ; did she not mention her name ?”

“ When I asked that question, Sir, she replied you were undoubtedly unacquainted with it, though she came upon business of the utmost importance.”

“ What business of such a nature can a total stranger have with me ? I presume she is a French lady ; and as she has at least raised my curiosity, let her know I will wait upon her immediately.”

The servant left the room; Douglas reflected for a few seconds, then said, "Sure it is not Madame de Fierval!" rising as he spoke.

"I wonder you were not tempted to enquire whether she was young or handsome," said Sir Charles.

"I should have thought such a question very indiscreet; as, had the servant answered in the affirmative, you would indubitably have envied my good fortune; however, if I can do it with any propriety, I will introduce you to her before I suffer her to depart," opening a door communicating with the library.

A very handsome woman of her age, for she appeared near forty, was seated by the fire, with a handkerchief to her eyes, who rose upon his entrance, and curtsied very profoundly. Douglas bowed in return, and requested she would resume her seat, addressing her in French; and taking a chair himself, entreated she would favour him with
her

her commands. The stranger seemed excessively confused, and made several unsuccessful attempts before she was able to speak to be understood; at last she articulated, "I hope, Sir, you will excuse the liberty I have taken; a total stranger as I am in England, and for many years secluded from the world, I am afraid my conduct strikes you as very strange. I am sensible I ought to apologize for thus intruding upon a gentleman of your rank at so unseasonable an hour. A mother's feelings, however, have rendered me unusually bold; for I am come, Sir, under the authority of that sacred name, to claim a young lady, left under your protection by an angel, if ever a daughter of mortality deserved that appellation. Perhaps you are acquainted with my unhappy story; if so, you can make some allowance for my present agitation, and will surely not refuse (as I have undoubted proofs to produce of our relationship) to let me see and embrace my child—my much-loved Albertine."

Douglas was by no means astonished at the strange discovery, as he had long known his ward was not the daughter of Madame de Valcarné. That amiable woman had revealed the secret of her birth to him in the letter enclosed in her will, knowing he would never accept any part of her fortune while he considered Albertine as her lawful and natural heir:—the lady before him he had no doubt was his ward's mother, as he even perceived a strong family likeness between them; and the story Madame de Valcarné had written, would easily enable him to detect her, if she attempted to impose upon him. Besides, he knew that excellent woman had presented Albertine to her mother, then a Nun in a Convent in St. Maloes, soon after their landing in France; therefore no impostor could introduce herself, were she so inclined, under that title. Still he thought it necessary to be perfectly satisfied before he complied with the stranger's request, which to him appeared, at all events, very imprudent, as Madame de Valcarné had particularly wished

Albertine should continue to pass for her daughter, and bear her name, notwithstanding she had thought fit to gratify her unfortunate mother with a sight of her child, and had informed the young lady of the degree of relationship which subsisted between her and the monastic victim of her paternal grandfather's tyranny. The large fortune Madame de Valcarné left this child of her adoption, and whom all her friends supposed to be her own, was, he presumed, what had induced the lady before him to quit her peaceable habitation, and come in search of a child prudence certainly ought to have forbidden her to claim ; though he supposed she could not resist the temptation of participating in the late Baronne's generosity, as this public acknowledgment must oblige her daughter to support her in some degree of affluence.

These reflections did not increase his cordiality towards the stranger ; therefore, with the utmost coolness, he replied, " Your con-

duſt certainly ſtrikes me as very ſtrange, Madam ; for even admitting you can convince me you are the mother of my ward (and I ſhall require ſome very ſtrong proofs of your veracity), what benefit can ariſe to this young lady by ſuch an acknowledgment ? You are certainly acting in direct oppoſition to the wiſhes of her benefactreſs :— ſuppoſing the late Baronne de Valcarné to be no relation of her reputed daughter's, ſhe certainly intended, and expected the world would remain in ignorance of the ſecret you ſeem ſo anxious to diſcloſe—“ out of love for your child,” you will ſay. I ſhould be ſorry to hurt your feelings ; but would you have been equally ſolicitous to ſeek her, had ſhe ſtood in need of your pecuniary aſſiſtance ? You may think yourſelf entitled to ſhare her income, but I am by no means of that opinion ; as doubtleſs the Baronne, with her accuſtomed munificence, made ſome provision for the mother of a child ſhe brought up, educated, and ever conſidered as her own, even in the diſpoſal of her property.”

“ Only

“ Only let me see my child, Sir—I ask no more ; believe me I am far from (as you suppose) coveting any part of her fortune. Permit me to convince you I am her mother ; she has seen me ; I have pressed her to my bosom ; and her acknowledgment must remove the doubts you entertain ;—still they are natural, if you are unacquainted with the secret ; yet surely the Baronne must have thought it necessary to acquaint you that she was not the mother of my child ; for I know you were upon the point of marriage with that lady : this she told me herself when I last saw her at St. Maloes, where she landed purposely to afford me an opportunity to embrace my child. She was then in a very weak state of health, but kindly entered into a thousand interesting details, and made me, as you rightly judged, a very munificent present. She told me whom she meant to appoint my daughter’s guardian, should she die before she saw her settled, and advised us to correspond regularly, as our letters might prove a great comfort to both ; for at that time I

had

had no idea of quitting my Convent. Lately I have been obliged to do so; and not having heard from Albertine since she wrote me word of her benefactress's death, (though I have addressed several letters to her under cover to Principal Douglas) my anxiety, knowing her to be in a foreign country, separated from all her early friends, and deprived of the protection of that best of women, has brought me over, and perhaps justly exposed me to those suspicions you seem, Sir, to entertain of the motives that induced me to take so strange a step. Does my daughter live? and was it by your desire she ceased corresponding with me?"

"Your first question I can very easily answer, Madam, doubtless infinitely to your satisfaction. Mademoiselle de Valcarné is in perfect health, and under the care of a lady of unblemished character, exemplary morals, and established reputation; and her companions are young ladies of the first rank in this country. My uncle, the Duke of Durham, has superseded me in the office of
her

her guardian; and as his ward, she has hitherto met with every mark of respect.—Why she ceased to correspond with you, Madam, I cannot so easily resolve—not by my desire, I give you my word of honour; but may I entreat you would permit me to let the Duke of Durham know your business in England? His age, universal philanthropy, and known judgment will render him a very proper and impartial judge of your claim; no light resolution ought to be taken in a matter of such importance. Have I your leave to introduce you to his Grace?”

“Undoubtedly, Sir, and my thanks for the considerate kind offer.”

Douglas instantly rose, and returned into the eating parlour, where, to his infinite satisfaction, he found the Count de St. Mars; as he thought he could not have had a better counsellor upon such an occasion. After the few compliments their intimacy required, he repeated what had passed between him and

and the stranger, acknowledging he did not entertain a doubt of her being his ward's mother : still, as he could not approve of her wish to disclose a secret Madame de Valcarné had taken every method should remain inviolable, he was at a loss how to act, and entreated the Duke, the Count, and the Baronet would accompany him into the library, listen to her story (which he should be able to confute, if it did not accord with the one Madame de Valcarné had left in manuscript), and then assist him with their advice, as he particularly wished to act up to the will of the deceased, who had merely entrusted him with the secret of Albertine's birth, as an inducement to appropriate the large share of her fortune she had bequeathed him, to his own use. This he protested he never should have done, had he continued to suppose her the Baronne's daughter.

“ Madame de Valcarné acted with her accustomed prudence,” said the Duke ; “ and if this lady proves herself to be your ward's
6 mother,

mother, why not allow her to assume that title, my dear George? You will certainly be, in a great measure, relieved from a very delicate charge, and have it in your power to prevent her from squandering Albertine's fortune, who may contribute to her establishment without any injury to herself; but come, let us hear the lady's story before we decide upon what will be most proper."

The Count agreed that would be best, and they accompanied Douglas into the adjoining apartment, who separately introduced them to the stranger's notice—the Duke as his uncle—the Count de St. Mars, late Governor of the French Military School—and the Baronet, as his most intimate friends. The lady curtsied to each; and then, as Douglas informed her he had prepared them for her recital; began, at his request, to account for her daughter being brought up under another name, and as the offspring of another woman—a matter they all thought necessary

necessary should be elucidated before they could decide upon the justice of her claim.

“ I am the daughter of a tradesman of St. Maloes, in Brittany, gentlemen, and at the age of sixteen I became acquainted with the Chevalier de L'Epinois, the name that the late Baron de Valcerné bore before he married the excellent lady whose death every one must lament. The Chevalier was then about one and twenty, and a Captain in the regiment *de la Reine*, then in garrison at St. Maloes : he soon declared a violent passion for me ; and being neither his own master, nor of age, he prevailed upon me to consent to a private marriage. I was young and inexperienced, and too easily agreed to his proposal.— We had not been married more than three months when, by some means or other, the Viscount de L'Epinois, his father, became acquainted with our union. The Chevalier was immediately sent for home, and ordered to prepare for Martinico, to marry the Governor's only daughter : this was a very great match
for

for him, as the family was very poor. How his father had discovered his unfortunate connexion with me, he could not conceive, for the Viscount forced him to acknowledge it by this command, in hopes of being allowed to return to me ; instead of which, his father told him he had heard of his folly, though he did not suppose he had carried it to such an excess. A marriage so contracted was, however, not binding ; and he should not think of disgracing himself and family, by acknowledging me for his daughter ;—he therefore insisted upon his instantly embarking for Martinico, adding, he should take upon himself the care of me, which he did as soon as ever my husband had failed, by obtaining a *Lettre de Cachet* for putting me into a *Convent of Force*, and getting our marriage dissolved by the then existing laws of France, without any farther ceremony.—My father was not a man of sufficient consequence to obtain redress. The Chevalier no sooner arrived at the place of his destination, than he was united to Mademoiselle de Valcerné,

Valcarné, only daughter of the Baron of that name, then Governor of the Island. She had no will of her own any more than the Chevalier; the match was made up between the two fathers, and the children were obliged to submit: fortunately they were both excellent tempers, which made them happy in each other, though they had married without love. After some time, relying upon the excellence of her disposition, the Chevalier revealed his unfortunate attachment to me to his then wife, and expressed a wish to settle something that might render my life as comfortable as circumstances would permit. In six months after their marriage, they obtained permission of the Baron, with whom they resided, to visit the Chevalier's relations in France, and embarked on board a vessel bound for St. Maloes, where they landed about two months after I had lain-in of that child I am now, gentlemen, come, with your permission, to claim. I had been allowed to lie-in at my father's, and was just returning to my Convent, when the Chevalier

valier and his Lady arrived. That amiable woman immediately visited me, requested to see me alone, and consoled me in the midst of my afflictions. To leave my child, and retire to a Convent for life, had nearly proved too much for me; but this excellent lady, after some time, told me who she was, and promised to bring up my daughter under her father's eyes, and adopt her as her own.

“ This unexpected kindness quite revived me, and I returned to my Convent without regret, leaving my child under my mother's care, with whom she was to remain till Monsieur and Madame de L'Epinois returned to Martinico. They spent near seven months in France, for the Viscount de L'Epinois died almost as soon as I had taken the veil, which I did about three months after their arrival at St. Maloes. Upon the Viscount's death, Madame de L'Epinois wrote me word the child should pass for her own; it would easily be believed in the island that she had lain-in in France, and would ensure my daughter

daughter a much more comfortable rank in society as she grew up. This letter contained a *brevet* for a pension of two thousand livres a year, which this generous lady had settled upon me—much more than I knew how to spend in my prison; but here is her kind letter, Sir,” presenting it to Douglas, who, having examined the writing and date, said it was Madame de Valcerné’s hand.

He read it over with great emotion;—and when he had finished, said, “Her excellent heart displays itself in every line.”

“A very just remark, Sir,” replied the stranger; “it is dated, as you perceive, from the Chateau de L’Epinois, in Berry.

“All was arranged as she had kindly proposed, and my child returned with them to Martinico, as Mademoiselle de L’Epinois. Here is another letter from the Chevalier, Sir, which will still further confirm my story; it was wrote as soon as they arrived at St. Pierre, in Martinico, to inform me the Baron de Valcerné fully believed Albertine to be his grand-daughter, and was dotingly fond

fond of her.”—Douglas looked over this letter also.—“ Here is another, Sir, in the same dear hand, which informed me of the Baron de Valcerné’s death, and his accession to the title, &c. &c. and of the solemn promise his amiable wife had made him, not having any children of their own, never to reveal the secret of Albertine’s birth; and here,” she continued, “ is the last I received from him, written upon his death-bed, in which he informs me he had left all his own fortune to my daughter, and that Madame la Baronne would ever continue to supply the place of a tender mother, as she had hitherto done, to our child, and meant, by his desire, to inform her of my unfortunate story as soon as she attained to years of discretion, that I might, at least, have the consolation of corresponding with her; and should the Baronne ever return to France, she had promised to introduce us to each other. But why need I repeat what you have it in your power to read? Suffice it to say, she kept her word as religiously respecting her last, as her former promises,

promises, and landed purposely at St. Maloes to bring my daughter and me acquainted.— How sincerely did she participate in my transports, and how kindly did she deign to inform me of the purport and occasion of her voyage to England! While she lived, she said, she should never part with Albertine; but should she not recover, which indeed she did not seem to expect, she strongly advised my daughter, as the Revolution had already broke my fetters, to send for me over to England, where she supposed she should fix her abode, that we might enjoy each other's society, and acknowledge, or not, our relationship, as was most consonant to our joint feelings respecting past events; desiring me, for the present, to correspond with them through the means of Principal Douglas, but promising to send me a further direction as soon as she was settled in Great-Britain.— I heard no more from the dying faint, who is now reaping the reward of her goodness to me and mine, in that Heaven her immaculate life gave her a foretaste of even while

on

on earth; and I have received but one short letter from my daughter since her decease, merely containing a detail of the death of her benefactress, of your being appointed her guardian, Sir, and other *et ceteras*, but not the invitation, I own I rather expected; and as she gave me no other direction, I immediately answered it through the medium of Principal Douglas; and some little time since wrote again, through the same channel, but receiving no answers, my anxiety got the better of my prudence, and I set out for England—landed at Brighton, where I traced my daughter to the physician's, who had attended the late Baroness, from whom I learned your present name and place of abode; and to you, Sir, they referred me for intelligence of the young lady, who had not favoured them with a line since she left them. This account really led me to dread some accident had befallen her; and without considering the natural suspicions my eagerness might excite, I abruptly made my errand known to you, and my relationship

to your ward, without entering into any of the necessary preliminaries which ought to have preceded such an acknowledgment."

"Your impatience was so natural, Ma'am, that it certainly requires no excuse," replied Douglas; "nor have I a doubt remaining as to the identity of your person:—your story I was already acquainted with, as the late Madame de Valcarné addressed the particulars of it to me at the time she made her will; conscious I should not have accepted of any part of her fortune while I learned she had so near a relation as a daughter. Motives of delicacy have hitherto prevented me from even hinting to my ward that I was acquainted with her origin; but believe me, Madam, I am excessively happy to have it in my power to restore her to so near and dear a friend; though I must advise (except you, Ma'am, or my uncle, or Count de St. Mars, are of a contrary opinion, in which case, I shall submit to your superior judgment) that Mademoiselle de Valcarné should continue to bear that name, and pass for

for your niece, as I really think it would be a sort of reflection upon her father's memory, and even an affront to the late Baronne, to disclose a secret they were both so anxious to conceal. As her aunt and only surviving female relation, your coming over to England at my request, as may be said, to superintend her education, conduct, and morals, can surprise no one; and under that title you may as freely give way to your maternal affection as under that of a mother. However, I would have you reflect upon this proposal, and confer with these gentlemen upon its propriety during my absence; as the only amends I can make for my unjust suspicions is to hasten a meeting they have hitherto protracted."

Ringing the bell as he concluded, and ordering his carriage, he left the library, and hastened into his dressing-room, anxious to explain himself more fully to the lovely Isabella, of whom he rather hoped he might catch a glimpse during his stay at Mrs.

Shenstone's. He had already selected from among several elegant trinkets that had belonged to the late Madame de Valcarné, a beautiful gold enamelled *Souvenir*, or French memorandum case: on one side was his picture, drawn in Martinico, set round with very large brilliants; on the other a trophy of love, also in brilliants—the motto *Souvenir D'Amitie*. This he enclosed in a sheet of paper, upon which he wrote—

Oh! if the dream that sooths my mind,

Should false and groundless prove,

If I am doom'd at length to find

You can't return my love :

All I of Venus ask is this,

No more to let us join,

But grant me here the flattering bliss,

To die, and think you mine!—HIPPOLYTUS.

This he consigned to his pocket, and hurrying down, upon being informed his carriage was ready, just stepped into the library to inform Madame de L'Epinois he would

would return as speedily as possible. He learned, with great satisfaction, that she readily agreed to his proposal, which had met the approbation of both his uncle and friend.— During his drive to Hertford-street, Lady Isabella Kinross alone occupied his mind ;— nor did he once reflect upon whom he left behind, or why he was going to fetch his ward, till he was shewn into Mrs. Shenstone's drawing-room, where sat that lady, and several of her pupils, but neither Albertine nor the beautiful young Scotch woman. This perhaps was rather a fortunate circumstance, as Douglas's countenance might have betrayed the secret it was so much his interest to keep. After a general bow, he said he was come, with Mrs. Shenstone's leave, to fetch his ward for a few hours, as a particular friend of the young lady's was just arrived in England, and now waiting their return at Durham House.

No objection could be made to such a proposal ; and while Mrs. Shenstone was

signifying her approbation, Albertine came running in, to whom he repeated what he had been saying to that lady.

"Bless me, guardian, who is it?" cried she, in evident surprise.

"A lady, I am certain, you will be very happy to see," was the reply.

"Madame de Fierval, guardian?"

"No, Mademoiselle."

"Well, but who now? How can you be so tormenting—I have so few friends!"

"And set so little value by their letters," said Mrs. Shenstone, smiling; "I almost wonder at your present impatience, Mademoiselle."

"Yet I should have thought you were in habits of correspondence with some near and very dear friends," said Douglas, giving her a scrutinizing glance.

"You know I am very much attached to Madame de Fierval, guardian; but I believe Mrs. Shenstone has never forgiven me, as I happened to burn a letter from an old Nun before her."

"Was

"Was it dated St. Maloes, Mademoiselle?" asked Douglas, with unusual severity of looks and voice.

Albertine coloured violently while she affected to laugh, saying, "Is that a privileged place, guardian, or are the Nuns more amiable there than elsewhere?"

"It would take too long a time to answer such a comprehensive question, Mademoiselle," replied Douglas, "and I am in haste to return."

"Oh, I am at your orders, guardian; I will be ready in a moment," leaving the room, and convincing Douglas she would by no means enjoy hearing her mother was in England. That she should prefer Madame de Valcarné to Madame de L'Epinois, did not much astonish him; but that she should wantonly burn a letter from her mother, was a proof of ingratitude that lowered her very much in his esteem. She soon returned, and preceded him down stairs, near the bottom of which they were met by Lady Isabella and Mrs. Macpherson, who were

just come home. Albertine instantly asked her Ladyship if she had bought the books she had recommended. She answered in the affirmative ; and the former proceeded to tell her where she was going, till Douglas reminded her she kept her Ladyship upon the stairs ; contriving, while he spoke, as the lamp emitted a very faint light, and Mrs. Macpherson's head was turned to speak to the footman, to slip his small packet into her Ladyship's hand unperceived by any one, paying his parting compliment at the same moment. To refuse it was impossible, had her Ladyship been so inclined, which we must, as we pique ourselves upon our veracity, acknowledge was not the case ; for remember, gentle reader, she was not sixteen, and Douglas was the most elegant, most amiable, and most insinuating man she had ever seen ; and more than all, perfectly sincere in his professions. She had read her triumph in his animated countenance, and she longed, yet feared, he should guess what passed in her bosom. With trembling hands,

the

the first moment she could escape from her friends and governess, she broke open his parcel; and could he have seen her press the inanimate image of all her soul held dear to her lips, he would have thought himself the happiest and most favoured of mortals. The verses were read with rapture, which, with contemplating her elegant present, would have afforded sufficient occupation for the whole evening, if a summons to supper had not forced her to consign both *Souvenir* and envelope to her pocket, and hurry down to join the family party.

CHAP. III.

THE moment Douglas and Albertine were seated, she once more enquired who was waiting for them at Durham House, and he briefly related the occurrences of the afternoon; concluding by assuring her, he was excessively happy she would now have a natural female protector to look up to, with whom he should recommend her to reside in future, as she could be no where so properly situated as under her mother's roof;—though he had advised that lady to assume the title of her aunt, for various reasons, and more particularly out of respect to the memory of her deceased benefactress.—Humbled, mortified,

mortified, and dejected, Albertine learned, with the most poignant regret, the arrival of her mother, which she attributed solely to the unfortunate woman's cupidity; and when Douglas ceased speaking, said, "I am sure my former kind Mamma little expected I should be thus claimed by a total stranger, comparatively; she certainly told me the lady she introduced me to at St. Maloes was my mother, but I am sure she never wished our consanguinity to be made public; but did you know I was not Madame de Valcarné's daughter, guardian?"

The Baronne thought it necessary, upon many accounts, not to carry such a secret with her to the grave; she knew she could depend upon my discretion, and she particularly wished to convince me she had a right to dispose of her fortune in mine, or any other person's favour, whom she might chuse to make her heir. Madame de L'Epinois complains you never answered any of her letters; maternal tenderness, and anxiety for

your welfare, brought her to England, and I should have supposed you would rejoice at such an event. Have her unmerited misfortunes deprived her of your esteem, or to what am I to attribute your visible discontent?"

Albertine burst into tears, and leaning back in the carriage, made no answer to Douglas's question, who, excessively displeased with her, neither enquired into the cause, nor attempted to mitigate her sorrow, which convinced him, though educated by Madame de Valcarné, she possessed neither that lady's excellent principles, nor goodness of heart.—At last, finding he did not speak, she said,—“ Since you were acquainted with my birth, Sir, I almost wonder you accepted the title of guardian to the Chevalier de L'Epinois's bastard daughter; and I am still more surprised the late Baronne should have chosen, so unnecessarily, to lower me in your eyes.—Why did she educate me as her daughter, if
she

she meant to deprive me of that title when she died?"

"Then you really think that excellent woman has not done her duty by you, Mademoiselle? I can only say we absolutely differ in our opinions. As for myself, I conceived she paid me a very high compliment in appointing me your guardian; though, conscious my age rendered me unfit for such a trust, I consigned you to the care of my uncle, not out of want of respect for the Chevalier de L'Epinois's daughter, whom you, notwithstanding that Nobleman was *bona fide* married to the lady now waiting at Durham House, Mademoiselle Morin, are uncharitable enough to bastardize. However, you are not required to resign the title of the late Baronne's daughter, and as such I shall ever consider you:—to request you would recollect the lady you are going to see is your mother, whom love for you has brought to England, would be absurd; for if your heart refuses to acknowledge her, empty professions of regard, which your looks and actions would

would contradict, could not add much to her satisfaction ;—she is entitled to your respect—may that sentiment induce you to treat her with some degree of propriety ! This is all, nay, rather more, than I expect ; though I am afraid the unfortunate Madame de L'Epinois's hopes are far more sanguine.”

Their arrival in St. James's-square prevented Albertine from making any reply.—She suffered Douglas to hand her out of the carriage in silence, and into the library.—Madame de L'Epinois's agitation had been excessive as the meeting drew near, and she was unable to rise from her chair when they entered. Douglas therefore led his ward, whose countenance varied every moment, towards her mother ; while the other gentlemen retreated into an adjoining apartment. Madame de L'Epinois was able to extend her arms ; and conscious that Douglas's eyes were upon her, Albertine met her embrace, and faintly endeavoured to welcome her to England : when Madame de L'Epinois said—

“ May

“ May I flatter myself you are really happy to see me, my child? I am afraid I have been rather too precipitate;—I ought to have consulted you before I disclosed the secret of your birth, but I was fearful, under any other character, except my real one, I should not have been permitted to see you: had you answered my letter, I should not have come over in such haste.”

Fearful that Albertine should make the unfortunate mother severely repent having suffered her maternal tenderness to get the better of her prudence, Douglas said—

“ I trust, Ma'am, you will find your daughter every thing you can wish. Accustomed from her infancy to consider the late Madame de Valcarné as her mother, she can't immediately divest herself of that idea; and your arrival, though it must have gratified her in some respects, must also have strongly reminded her of her amiable kind patroness, who so long and so generously supplied your place, and whom I am sure you would never wish her to forget: you have long known
you

you had a daughter ; *she* has but very lately been informed you were her mother, and that at a moment when every tender sentiment for her supposed parent was awakened by her declining health. Consider well what I have said, my dear Ma'am ; make allowances for the kind error in which your daughter was educated, and suffer her to remember, and even to regret, her first mother in the arms of her second."—He then left the room, to rejoin the other gentlemen in the drawing-room, where the Count was pacing when he entered, and turning to Douglas, exclaimed—" My poor countrywoman's doubts and fears were but too well founded, I am afraid, my young friend ; her handsome daughter gave her a very cool welcome. Indeed, had she wished to see her, she would, ere this, as her mother justly observed, invited her over ;—but the poor soul, just emerged from the ignorance and superstition of a Convent, fancied the child was in a land of savages, because she had been told by her Father Confessor that the
English

English are heretics ; so hastened in search of her to prevent her being converted. However, I really believe she is an unaffected good kind of a woman ; and as the Duke and Sir Charles have told me that the young lady has rather too much French vivacity, a few of her mother's rigid notions may be of service to her. Did she seem pleased, George, when you informed her of Madame de L'Epinois's arrival ?”

“ It was too dark for me to observe the expression of her countenance, Sir, as it was during our drive from Hertford-street ; but to speak *franchement*, I don't think she will ever love Madame de L'Epinois as she did Madame de Valcarné, as every comparison she will naturally draw between them must terminate in favour of the latter. I can judge of her feelings by my own : could I, at her age, supposing a stranger had been presented to me as my father, have instantly, because he bore that title, have preferred him to Principal Douglas ? Surely not ; and Albertine

tine had not only equal reason to love and revere Madame de Valcarné, but she even believed she was her mother; therefore can it be supposed she can immediately transfer the affection she bore that lady to Madame de L'Epinois? In time the love of duty may become the love of inclination, but not instantly; the magic sound of mother may command obedience, but not always affection."

"I agree with you perfectly," rejoined the Duke; "but can't approve of your judging Albertine either after your own feelings or your own heart; for I am much mistaken, had Madame de Valcarné introduced her supposed daughter to a Princess of the blood royal, or even to a Duchess, instead of a simple Nun of very obscure, not to say low extraction, whether her regard for that lady would even have brought Albertine to England in her company. What say you, Sir Charles?"

"That

“That the Duchefs de L’Epinois would have met with a much more cordial reception than the poor Nun, your Grace.”

“I only hope my ward’s behaviour will convince you, uncle,” faid Douglas, “you have not done her juftice. Suppose I request the ladies to favour us with their company to tea?”

“True, and I mean to offer them an apartment for the night,” faid the Duke; “it would be cruel to feperate them upon the mother’s account, and highly improper our ward fhould accompany the good lady to an inn or hotel; to-morrow we fhall be able to procure them a proper lodging.”

Douglas therefore returned to the library, where he perceived both mother and daughter had been in tears. Taking no notice of this, he merely requested they would accompany him into the drawing-room; and Madame de L’Epinois, having accepted the Duke’s confiderate offer with fuitable acknowledgments of his goodnefs, a note was difpatched to Mrs. Shenftone, to inform her that her ward fhould ftay at Durham Houfe.

During

During the remainder of the evening, the conversation was very general; but Albertine was unusually dejected, and seemed by no means to enjoy the idea of residing with her mother, which was mentioned as a matter of course.—The Count promised to breakfast with the Duke the next morning, and at an early hour the party separated for the night.

Douglas was happy when at liberty to give way to his reflections; he felt the impropriety of endeavouring secretly to gain the affection of Lady Isabella, but he had no other resource. At all events, her guardians could not place him among the class of needy fortune-hunters, as he would freely, at that moment, have relinquished all claim to her fortune, to have secured her hand with their approbation; but such an offer would be absurd, and perhaps deemed an insult by those whose favour he wished to conciliate: he therefore determined, if possible, to win Mrs. Macallister over to his interest, as he should no longer have it in his power,

power, under any pretence, to call at Mrs. Shenstone's. This reflection made him, like his ward, seriously regret the unfortunate Nun had left her Convent ; he, however, rose early, and wrote the following letter, which he hoped to prevail upon Mrs. Macallister to deliver :—

“ Your Ladyship will doubtless think my practice accords very ill with my theory, when I assure you I am truly sensible of the impropriety of addressing you in this clandestine manner : unfortunately family feuds have rendered the name of Douglas obnoxious to those to whom I ought to apply for permission before I venture to infringe the strict laws of honour, by even disclosing the ardent and sincere passion you have inspired me with. All I can say in my own defence is, that it is founded upon the most disinterested motives ; and should you accept my vows, my family, fortune, and expectations might entitle me to your guardian's approbation, if
private

private pique ever gave way to such confessions:—yet under all these disadvantages, I must press my suit, and trust you will believe me when I assure you, even the delicate Racine has feebly expressed my sentiments, though his Hippolytus is the most ardent of all lovers. The language of romance may assist in some cases, but must fall very short of my feelings:—I loved you from the first moment we met; and could I prevail upon you to place your happiness under my guardianship, I trust you would never have reason to repent your condescension. Where there is no disparity on either side in point of family, fortune, and connexions, even the busy and censorious part of the world dare not say such an union is founded on improper motives; and the generous, feeling part of mankind must excuse what at best can be but a venial error. Your excellent grandmother, unbiaſſed by mistaken prejudices, still esteems the unsuccessful pretender to her daughter's hand; and can your other friends long withhold the olive branch?

Should

Should it be in their power to deprive you of any part of your fortune, I shall freely forgive them for even appropriating it to their own use. Your hand and heart are all I covet; and my present income is more than sufficient to support you in the same style of splendid affluence you have ever been accustomed to; therefore, dearest Lady Isabella, let us only consult our own hearts: mine has long been in your possession; need I say your determination will make me the happiest or most miserable of men? and that I shall ever remain your truly devoted

“ G. D.”

Before nine o'clock he sallied forth, thinking the early part of the morning the most likely time to obtain a private audience of Mrs. Macallister, and thought himself peculiarly fortunate in finding her alone.—Douglas's figure, insinuating manners, and comprehensive hints soon made the good woman

woman his staunch friend. She had nursed Lady Isabella, considered her as her own child, and concluded she must be happy with so handsome, and withal so generous a man. Besides, she was satisfied he was no fortune-hunter, and not a little proud to find herself the confidante of a Duke's nephew. She said she frequently waited upon Lady Isabella with oranges and other fruits, and assured him she would take an early opportunity to deliver his letter; and lest any suspicions might arise from his frequent visits, he promised to make them in future in the dusk of the evening, and not to come in, except a certain signal they agreed upon should be in the window, by which he was to understand the coast was clear.

Having thus settled every necessary preliminary towards establishing a free and uninterrupted correspondence with his beloved Isabella, he returned home in time for breakfast, and to assist at the council held afterwards, when it was agreed Albertine
and

and her mother should, for the present, be settled in a ready furnished house, under the care of the Count de St. Mars, whose age and character rendered him a very proper protector for both; and Madame de L'Epinois, from her total ignorance of the world, was to the full as much in want of one as her daughter. What with her past savings, and the presents she had from time to time received from the generous Baroness, she was possessed of between seven and eight thousand pounds; and not expecting to return, had brought letters of credit upon England to the amount of her little fortune.

The Count, upon acceding to the Duke's and Douglas's proposal, respecting residing with his countrywomen, had declared he would pay them two hundred a year for his board, but at their joint request took upon him the management of their household, as far the most proper person of the three: they were to keep a carriage, a genteel suite of servants, &c. and an adequate

allowance was to be made Albertine, who was of course to contribute largely towards their housekeeping, as every article of luxury would be introduced merely upon her account, and that she might continue to cultivate the English acquaintance she had formed since her residence with Mrs. Shennstone, to whom both aunt and niece (as Madame de L'Epinois and her daughter were now and in future to be styled) set out to pay their respects, and inform her of the young lady's removal, as soon as the council broke up; while Douglas and the Count went out in search of a house for their accommodation, and soon met with one in St. Alban's Street, which its vicinity to Durham House rendered particularly convenient.— Proper servants were ordered to be engaged, and the following evening the two ladies and their *Chevalier d'Honneur* removed to their new quarters, much to the satisfaction of Douglas, who was no longer actuated by any sentiment but regard for the late Madame de Valcerné's request, to interest

terest himself in the future plans or welfare of his ward, whose reception of her mother, and subsequent cool behaviour to that unfortunate woman, had convinced him she was totally devoid of either feeling or natural affection, and of course unworthy his or any sensible man's esteem:—nevertheless, he hoped her fortune would procure her some eligible match, and learned, with pleasure, that Colonel Fraser meant to become a candidate for her hand, and determined to second his pretensions as far as lay in his power.

He had, to his inexpressible joy, been honoured with an answer to the letter entrusted to Mrs. Macallister; and though every line breathed native modest diffidence, still the lovely writer unaffectedly acknowledged her prepossession in his favour, and delicately regretted the impossibility of their mutual regard meeting the approbation of her friends: but gave him no reason to suppose that would be an insuperable obstacle to their union.

It may be supposed her letter did not long remain unanswered, and that every tender persuasion was made use of to induce her to allow him to supersede her guardians in their title of her protector.—The language of sincerity is sure to enforce belief. Douglas had no sinister motives for addressing the lively Scotch woman; no deficiency, in point of pedigree and fortune, rendered it necessary for him to have recourse to the flowery images of romance to depicture his feelings; he wrote the dictates of his heart, and his arguments were those of common sense; and Lady Isabella felt she was beloved by a congenial soul, whose homage was paid to the sweetness of her disposition, and the artless innocence of her manners, not to her exterior charms, or to the still more powerful attractions of her fortune. She had indeed been informed that the present Duke of Durham had been her father's rival in her mother's affection; but could that circumstances have any weight in the present instance? Did that render Douglas less handsome, less amiable,

or

or less sincere? Certainly not. Besides, she was informed, from pretty good authority, that he might select whom he pleased among the present belles of fashion. Indeed all her companions were lavish in his praises; it was therefore particularly flattering to find herself the object of his preference. She was not sorry Albertine had changed her abode, as the piercing eyes of jealousy might have discovered what she was so conscious ought to be concealed if she wished to bear the pleasing name of Douglas; and she looked forward to that epocha with more than hope, as she found it depended solely upon herself to shorten the probation of her much-admired lover.

CHAP. IV.

WITHIN the week after Archy's disgrace, the Mackenzie family were visited by an old friend of the Knight's, who had for some years resided upon a small estate near Tenby, in Pembrokehire, and where her Ladyship and Miss Margaret had spent near six weeks the preceding summer.

Mr. Colville was, if possible, a much greater miser than Sir Archibald, or rather my Lady; and being, like most of his stamp, generally involved in a law-suit, often found it necessary to come to London very cheap, and particularly convenient to lodge at his
worthy

worthy friend's, to whom he frequently sent small presents of poultry, pork, cheese, &c. which were equally acceptable to Lady Mackenzie, and in fact cost him nothing, as they were the produce of his own farm-yard or dairy. He had a daughter, who superintended his household, and whom it was supposed would not only have a very large fortune when she married, but a considerable accession at his demise. This young Welch woman her Ladyship had therefore, in her own mind, destined for her son Archy; but as Mr. Colville meant to chuse his son-in-law by the weight of his purse, such a proposal would by no means have met his consent.—Of this Lady Mackenzie was aware, having several times sounded him at a distance upon the subject. However, if the match could but be brought about (and she would even have connived at an elopement, rather than have missed such a chance), she thought it signified very little upon what terms, but never ventured to spring a mine till she was at a certainty of its taking effect;

and she entertained great hopes her next visit to Lanmendower would bring matters to a crisis, as she meant Archy should be of the party, who had also the good fortune to be godson to his destined father-in-law.

Knowing Mr. Colville must be in London during the Spring, they had wrote him a very pressing invitation to become their guest, hinting that some part of the family would return with him into Pembrokehire; and as the avaricious Welchman was unacquainted with their projects, he liked their society, and thought his daughter could learn nothing but good from the provident Lady Mackenzie:—he therefore proceeded immediately from the inn where he alighted from the Welch mail coach, into Leicester Square, met with a most cordial welcome from every branch of the family, was put in possession of the best apartment, and intreated to consider himself perfectly at home. He had been already informed of John's promotion, and received a hint that they were in daily expectation

expectation Archy would be equally fortunate ; but he was too much occupied with his own affairs to pay much attention to the continual encomiums lavished upon his godson, whom her Ladyship prognosticated would make an excellent father of a family. But he thought more about his law-suit than his godson's good qualities, and paid an early visit to his solicitor, from whom he understood it would be necessary that he should wait upon one of his principal and most material witnesses, who resided at Windsor ; and as his suit in a great measure depended upon this gentleman's evidence, he wished to behave to him with particular politeness, and thought a pound or two might not be thrown away in treating such a man : therefore he mentioned this necessary jaunt upon his return into Leicester Square, and asked the Mackenzies if they would accompany him, privately hoping they would share the expences of the day. Her Ladyship would not have started a single objection had he offered to become Paymaster-General ; but as he

omitted that circumstance, she hardly knew whether Sir Archibald could be spared for a whole day at such a busy season, with other evasive excuses, perfectly understood by Mr. Colville, who, by way of farther encouragement, and in hopes they would propose borrowing the carriage of some of their quality acquaintance, of whom they were continually boasting, said he would stand *treat all* when they arrived.

Peggy ventured to observe that she had never been at Windsor. Her Ladyship took no notice; but one part of the difficulty being removed, entered into a discussion upon the various modes of conveyance, as Mr. Colville wished to calculate the likely expences of the journey:—he told them he would certainly have gone alone, if he had not found he should, very likely, be detained in town longer than he expected, in which case some sort of acknowledgment to the Knight's family for their civility became almost necessary. Besides, he hoped to impress his Windsor friend with a greater idea of
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of his consequence, by bringing titled folks in his suite. However, no final arrangements were made when the journey was first mentioned, as Colville did not press the matter in the way Lady Mackenzie both hoped and expected.

As soon as she was alone with her family, the subject was again started; post-chaises, glass coaches, and stages were all mentioned.— Her Ladyship protested Mr. Colville was very mean; and as for accompanying him upon his present plan, it would be highly absurd;—for the money they should thus throw away, merely to oblige him, would enable them to give an elegant dinner, should such a thing be required, to Johnny's or their own friends; and she saw no reason why she should put herself to such an expence to oblige a rich old miser, who had but one daughter to provide for. It was therefore agreed some plausible excuse should be made for not accepting his proposal, on supposition that Mr. Colville named it again;

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assuring

assuring her favourite Margaret that they would go comfortably by themselves during the course of the summer, as no one had a greater wish to oblige her children when they acted up to her precepts, than herself: and as no notice was taken of the matter during the evening, her Ladyship supposed Mr. Colville had, like herself, thought better of it; but the following morning, after his accustomed visit to his lawyer's, that gentleman came home in high glee, and before he took a chair, exclaimed, "My good Lady, I have arranged our journey to Windsor I hope to your satisfaction; but we must go to-morrow, if possible, and it shan't cost you twopence, except you chuse it."

A moment was now sufficient to determine Lady Mackenzie to oblige her *gude friend*. Indeed, the next day would be particularly convenient, she recollected, as Sir Archibald was disengaged; and required a
further

further explanation concerning their mode of travelling.

“ Why, you must know, my Lady, my attorney keeps a carriage, which I, in common with the rest of his clients, assist him to support : our six-and-eight-pences grease the wheels, and I think I am almost entitled to a ride in it now and then. Tricket is going into the country himself for a day or two, more or less ; and having given me this piece of information, that I may not call in Hanover Street during his absence, he left me alone with his wife, to attend another client.—I must say Madam is a very flaunty, extravagant body ; but that don't concern us, you know.”

“ Certainly not, my gude Sir, and there is nae harm in turning sitch extravagant people's follies to some account.”

“ So say I, my Lady ; you reason like Solomon. However, to make short of my story, you can't think how nicely I came over the silly body to make us an offer of
her

her carriage ; for when she found you were to be of the party, egad ! she was ready to do any thing to be seen in public with a real Lady, as she observed ; so I was forced to ask her to accompany us. Now let me tell you how I propose to travel.—Tricket's is a d——d flashy coach, therefore 'twill be no disgrace to ride in it, and depend upon it, Madam will stick herself out in her best bib and tucker ; so shall I run back, and tell her you have agreed to condescend to make use of her carriage ?”

Her Ladyship graciously acquiesced, Sir Archibald expressed his approbation, Peggy simpered, and Archy grinned applause. Away posted the indefatigable Mr. Colville to inform Mrs. Tricket all was arranged, who requested he would not mention a word of the matter to her husband, as he never chose that she should leave home when he was absent ; and to prevent her from following the bent of her inclinations, their coach was to undergo a trifling repair during that period : but that was of no signi-
fication,

fication, she assured her, or rather his client. She could easily bribe the coachman to procure her another for the day, which would be attended with a very trifling expence, as their own horses would equally draw it; and they proceeded to settle when and where the party were to meet. As Mr. Tricket resided in Hanover Street, Hanover Square, and the horses would have a long day, it was thought adviseable that the Mackenzies and Mr. Colville should walk into Piccadilly, where Mrs. Tricket was to take them up at seven o'clock precisely, that they might have time to look about them when they reached Windsor.

In addition to the mother, Mr. Colville found he must also be burthened with the company of the eldest daughter—a sickly girl between twelve and thirteen, whom Mamma dared not leave at home, but whose secrecy she would be answerable for, if she was admitted into the party. Determined not to be generous by halves, Mr. Colville swore
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the more the merrier, and hastened back into Leicester Square, to inform his good friends how every thing was finally settled. Upon understanding Miss Tricket was to go, Lady Mackenzie said Archy should stay at home: indeed she would have previously objected to his being of the party, by way of punishing him for his late misdemeanor, if she had not conceived it necessary to conceal his failings from her guest; but that gentleman vowed his godson should not be served so, and generously gave him half-a-crown to hire himself a horse, which Archibald accepted with many thanks, though he knew it was not half enough for the purpose, and set out immediately to provide one.

Next morning the Mackenzie party, Archy excepted, who was gone in quest of his animal, were under the walls of Devonshire House, where they were to ascend their vehicle, by a quarter before seven. They walked about, anticipating the fights in expectation, till Archy came up mounted

upon a tall lean black horse, whose ribs Mr. Colville (who was a pretty good judge of horse flesh, from his constant residence in the country) protested he could have counted had he stood at Hyde-Park turnpike, when he rode up to Devonshire House. The animal's face was delicately white, so were his legs, and his sides covered with similar spots from shoulder to flank—a proof of his excellence, Mr. Colville observed.

Archy was dressed in the best suit he was master of, as the Ranelagh dress was even past scowering. His black satin breeches did not look much in character, but he wished to appear genteel; and not being worth a pair of riding boots, he was forced to content himself with a pair of walking ones, to which he had affixed a pair of massive spurs, which he had borrowed of a post-boy belonging to the stable-yard from whence he had procured his horse; and the lad had also lent him his driving whip, so
that

that altogether his figure was truly grotesque, and highly diverting to Mr. Colville.

As their patience was nearly exhausted, it being now more than half past seven, Lady Mackenzie desired him to ride into Hanover Street, to see what detained the lawyer's Lady, when, to their infinite satisfaction, the carriage appeared at a distance while she was giving Archy his instructions; and the moment the coach stopped, Mrs. Tricket began to make ten thousand apologies for having been behind her time, as well as for the shabby appearance of her carriage, which was the best that could be procured upon so short a notice; then launched out into an exaggerated description of the superlative elegance of their own.

Mr. Colville prudently advised her to defer any further detail till they were upon the road. The three ladies took their seats forwards, and Miss Tricket backwards, between the two gentlemen. Sir Archibald's footboy,

footboy, who attended, closed the door, mounted the box, and they drove on.

The coachman, a little surly looking fellow, grumbled out, when he saw the party following each other into the vehicle,—“ Well, damme, how many more!” but made no other remarks, and they proceeded on their journey, all in excellent temper, praising the weather, and prognosticating that they should have a most agreeable day.—It had just gone eight as they drove through the turnpike at Hyde-Park-Corner. This Mr. Colville remarked while he was paying; and the moment they were once more in motion, began to calculate what time they should be at Windsor.—Not under four hours, he was afraid, as they must stop a little while to bait, and the roads were very heavy in some places, and they merely went a sort of hackney-coach jog-trot: and Archy sometimes rode before, at other times behind them; but when he understood the coachman meant to stop at Cranford-bridge, rode

rode forward to inform the innkeeper what a noble party were coming; from whom, however, he did not derive much emolument, as Lady Mackenzie said it was not a time of morning either to eat or drink, and the rest of the party chose to be of her opinion. They merely paraded about a large garden adjoining the inn, to pass away the hour their coachman chose to stay; and they found they should be later than they had expected. Mr. Colville grew uneasy, for fear that the gentleman he was going to visit should have dined before they arrived: however, as soon as they had once more resumed their seats in the carriage, the coachman was ordered to make the best of his way, and as there were two roads, to take the nearest of course; but the fellow chose to misconstrue their meaning, and went the farthest about, stopping at Slough, where he insisted upon giving his horses a mouthful of hay, and a drop of water, or they would never be able to drag such a heavy load up the hill. It was therefore half past one before they arrived

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at the Castle-Inn, and were no sooner conducted into a large dining-room, than Mr. Colville set out in search of his friend before he gave any orders concerning dinner; but soon returned with a lengthened visage, to inform them the gentleman was from home, and not expected back till the following evening; he must therefore leave what he meant to have said to him in writing—"Deuced provoking," he went on, "considering all things (alluding to the expence). However, what can't be cured must be endured; though I might as well have remained in London for the good I shall do! But, now we are here, we must have something to eat and drink," calling for the bill of fare. A very long one was immediately produced.

"Well," said the old gentleman, holding it at arms' length, "here seems something of all sorts; you have only to ask and have—here, ladies, you may as well please your fancy as not."

Lady

Lady Mackenzie, understanding he was to treat, declined interfering in the order, and Mrs. Tricket followed her example ;—no one else was applied to.

“ Why then,” continued Mr. Colville, “ I saw a very fine leg of mutton as I came in—every body likes that ; so we will have it boiled, Mr. Waiter—and caper sauce, do ye mind, for I would not give a farthing for it without ; let us have the very one I saw hanging in the larder, and a couple of roast fowls—what say you, ladies ? have I pleased your palates ? ”

All assured him they were perfectly satisfied ; and the waiter retired with orders to have dinner upon table by three o'clock.—In a few minutes the man returned, to inform them the mutton would not be ready before half past three at soonest, the cook said, as it was then past two.

Mrs.

Mrs. Tricket declared the cook was in the right ; allowing the leg of mutton to weigh only six pounds, and the water to be then boiling, it would take better than an hour and a half.

“ Well, I dare say you and the cook, my good Madam,” replied Mr. Colville, “ understand these things better than I ; so let the dinner be upon table at the cook’s own time, Mr. Waiter, that I may judge whether he understands his business.”

This important affair being thus settled, he proposed their taking a walk to see the Castle, and what else worthy of notice the town afforded :—fearful his companions might wish for a snap to stay their stomachs, he therefore endeavoured to divert their attention to more pleasing objects, foreseeing he should necessarily be obliged to spend a great deal without accomplishing the object he had in view. Most of the company were seated ;
but

but Mrs. Tricket, who, more fond of looking about her than the rest, had stepped out upon a balcony open to the street, where she had not stood many minutes before she called out, "Do come here, Miss Mackenzie; here are two gentlemen mounted something like."

Unfortunately Margaret lost the sight, as the handsome cavaliers had turned under the gateway before she reached the balcony; and in a few seconds more, to the infinite surprise, and various other sensations the Mackenzie family found it impossible to define, Douglas and Sir Charles Creighton (who, to avoid a riotous tavern dinner in town, had made this excursion) passed their door, which stood open, preceded by the master, and followed by several waiters into an adjoining apartment, which was indeed merely separated by a moveable partition from the room they were in possession of.

"Bless

"Bless me," exclaimed Lady Mackenzie, "is nae that the Honourable Mr. Douglas, Sir Archibald? Wha would have expected seeing him at Windfor!"

Sir Archibald saw nothing astonishing in the affair, and Mrs. Tricket declared she had never seen two smarter young gentlemen, enquiring which was the Honourable Mr. Douglas.

"The other gentleman is a Baronet, Ma'am," replied her Ladyship, without directly answering her question; "Mr. Douglas is nephew to the Duke of Durham, and will be a Duke himself at that Nobleman's demise."

"Has he got plenty of the ready?" enquired Mr. Colville: "'tis that makes the man."

Sir Archibald answered this question so much to his satisfaction, that he told the Knight, since he was acquainted with them,

he had better go and ask them to join the party.

Sir Archibald, not aware every word he uttered was overheard by Douglas and the Baronet, replied, " Though he could boast of being rather intimate with the gentlemen in question, it was a liberty he could not take in a mixed company."

Mrs. Tricket tossed her head, and Mr. Colville thanked God he had no friends, or even acquaintance, he dared not take by the hand in any company.

At this moment they so plainly heard Douglas order the bill of fare, that they were convinced, by no means to the satisfaction of the Mackenzies, that he must have overheard every thing that had passed concerning himself.—Lady Mackenzie changed colour, while she whispered in the Knight's ear, " Ye mun always be prating nonsense, my dear."

" Hush!"

"Hush!" cried Mr. Colville, putting his finger upon his mouth to enjoin silence, that they might hear their neighbours' orders concerning dinner.—Stewed tench, fricasseed chickens, green goose, &c. &c. were bespoke for five o'clock: a cold fowl, ham, lobster, &c. with a bottle of Madeira for an immediate snap.

"What a cursed extravagant young fellow!" cried Mr. Colville; "why he has ordered enough for us all, and is going to stuff his guts now, as if he had not thought of dinner; he had need be made of money at this rate."

Lady Mackenzie looked as she felt, very much frightened, and entreated, in a low voice, that Mr. Colville would recollect their neighbours had ears as well as themselves.

"What of that, my Lady!" cried the undaunted Welchman; "I spoke no treason!"

“Nor was there any extravagance in ordering a luncheon, methinks,” quoth Mrs. Tricket; “I should relish one myself, and late dinners make one needful.”

“Now don’t think, Ma’am, I speak from a view to save my money, but depend upon it a snap will totally spoil your dinner; a walk will do us all a deal more good: what say you, my Lady? You know I am always free enough when I treat my friends.”

“Aye, in gude troth, my gude friend; and for my own part, I never take any thing between meals; and I believe few people enjoy a better state of health.”

Colville’s countenance brightened; and turning to Mrs. Tricket, he said, “You find, Ma’am, I only spoke for your good: however, if you chuse to have any thing, why only say so, that it may be ordered immediately; but I protest I vote for your trying a walk in preference;” and excessively provoked, though she tried to conceal it, Mrs. Tricket said, “She would for once follow his prescription.”

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The whole party therefore sallied forth in quest of fights. Upon the stairs they met the fowl, ham, &c. which were enough to set a person's mouth watering, the lawyer's lady observed.

Mr. Colville prognosticated that neither Mr. Douglas nor the Baronet would live long; they were too fond of good eating and drinking: and what was even a Dukedom without a good state of health? But such young fellows only thought of throwing money away."

As it was his intention to keep the party out till dinner was ready, he scarcely allowed them to move ten steps without finding some fresh object to admire; and when they reached the Castle, proposed walking round, that they might see every thing worth notice without side, before they examined things within doors.

During their walk, Lady Mackenzie drew Margaret aside to expatiate upon the unexpected appearance of Mr. Douglas at Windsor, and to lament that they were so disagreeably situated respecting their apartment.—“ Would to God,” she went on, “ that prating lawyer’s wife was but tongue-tied for a few hours, as weel as Mr. Colville ! for there is nae sitch thing as making them speak low ; and every word we say will be overheard, ye ken : therefore be sure, Peg, ye say aw ye can devise, obliquely to flatter Maister Douglas’s vanity ; and ye, Archy,” beckoning him towards her, “ should opportunity offer, bow with aw due reverence, and gently hint, when Maister Colville is running on in his rude way, that he is nae acquainted with the gentlemen in question, and that ye have an infinite respect for Maister Douglas, wha has been your brother’s best friend, and sitch like civil things in a pleasing tone ; mark my words, or take the consequence !”

Archibald,

Archibald, who had never forgiven the fingeing bout, and who could not divest himself of the idea that Harcourt and Douglas were the same person, had transferred all the hatred he bore the former to the latter, which was considerably increased by the personal dread he now had of Douglas, whom, in consequence of his late disgrace, he considered as his most inveterate foe: still he dared not venture to remonstrate with his mother; indeed their near approach to the Castle gate prevented him from making any answer. Sir Archibald rung the bell, and, at the expiration of some minutes, they were admitted by a girl, deputed to shew the apartments instead of her mistress, and whom they followed up stairs, but had scarcely begun to look round them before the bell rung again, and their conductress ran down, but returned in a few minutes, followed by Douglas and his friend.

“Was ever ony thing sae unfortunate or sae provoking!” whispered Lady Mackenzie

to Margaret; while Mrs. Tricket called out, "Well, if here an't those two smart gentlemen, Miss Mackenzie! How nicely they are dressed for riding—quite in character, I will assure you," giving Archy a scornful glance, which he did not notice, as he was standing with his back to the company in admiration of one of the pictures in the room, which had engrossed his attention from the moment he caught a glimpse of the detested Douglas, who had, as well as Sir Charles, the utmost difficulty to preserve his gravity, already highly amused by the remarks they had overheard. Lady Mackenzie's ever supple knees bent unusually low, while she hoped she had the honour of seeing Mr. Douglas and Sir Charles Creighton well.

Each bowed; but not wishing to become more intimate, simply thanked her Ladyship without returning her compliment; which put such a damp upon the hopes she began to entertain of turning her former introduction

introduction to advantage, that her gracious smiles vanished, and her colour faded almost as instantaneously as it had done at Lord Everly's. Douglas's reserved manner, voice, and features, reminded her strongly of the vagabond she perpetually declared she so cordially despised.

Conscious of her own weakness, and perceiving the gentlemen were by no means inclined to enter into conversation, she touched Sir Archibald's elbow, who, like his son, was looking every where but at the new comers, saying, "Sir Archibald, dinna ye see Maister Douglas and Sir Charles Creighton?"

The Knight had much rather not have seen them, but found it impossible to appear blind any longer; therefore faced about, bowed, as his Lady would have said with a due humility, as he never raised his eyes, and hoped, like her, that these *unwelcome intruders*

truders were well. His compliment met with a similar return.

Douglas, naturally proud, was almost haughty in the present instance, and never felt less inclined to encourage familiarity.—The Knight shrunk from his supercilious glances; they were those of an old acquaintance—the beggar Harcourt, when he delivered up his small pittance at Paris, and more recently came to solicit his protection in England. He followed him with his eyes, while Douglas crossed the room to one of the windows; thought he recognized the athletic, but elegant figure, nay even the walk of his former friend—so much did Douglas resemble his father in that respect; but his countenance bore more resemblance to his mother.

Archibald made shift, with a very bad grace, to bow as the friends passed him.—Margaret had curtsied with her mother, but all, more or less, felt a return of their former complaint;

complaint ; while the blunt Colville remarked for intimate friends the young sparks were strangely reserved, and the finest fellow of the two seemed damned proud !

This speech, which was meant for the benefit of the party, diverted the friends ; who still kept aloof, and agreed the speaker was a shrewd old fellow. It had a very different effect upon the Mackenzies, whose confusion rendered them incapable of attending to any thing their conductress pointed out for their admiration. Mr. Colville and Mrs. Tricket, however, talked enough for the whole set ; but their vulgar discourse, and absurd questions, merely increased the mortification of their companions, particularly as they perceived how much it amused the gentlemen, who, arm in arm, continued to saunter in their rear.

Colville, who conceived his money put him upon a footing with any man, and who had enjoyed the Knight's confusion and

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mortification,

mortification, which he presumed solely arose from his having boasted, as was literally the case, of an intimacy with the two bucks, that had never subsisted except in his own imagination, frequently addressed both Douglas and the Baronet, asking them full as many questions as he put to their conductresses, and felt highly gratified to find himself treated with the utmost politeness even by the *proud spark*, who seemed to look down upon his titled friend. The Knight, notwithstanding the excellent example before him, kept at a respectable distance from Douglas, who, rather tired at last of the Welchman's increasing volubility, and the pert remarks of Mrs. Tricket, walked forward with the Baronet, to avoid giving them an opportunity to renew their discourse.

Archy was unconsciously surveying them from head to foot. Colville, who perceived how he was occupied, burst out laughing. "What, drawing comparisons, my lad?—Those long boots and smart buck-skins beat

your short ones and black satins all to nothing, and are rather cheaper too in the end. Your's won't stand many forty mile jaunts, and an't the fashion neither, you perceive, extravagant as they are; and I much doubt whether they last you home, besides being quite out of character. In Wales, ecod! the folks would think you mad."

Mrs. Tricket laughed as heartily as the ludicrous commentator, while Archy longed to affront the prating old fellow. Indeed neither the Knight nor his Lady were pleased with what they thought very unseasonable raillery, and very likely to lower them in the opinion of the man none of them could assume sufficient courage to address a second time.— They were exceedingly happy when they were informed they had seen all the lions.

Douglas and Sir Charles made a sort of general passing bow, finding the Mackenzies did not chuse to precede them down stairs, and left them to deliberate upon what they ought

ought to give their conductress, who, having continued to curtsy as long as they were in sight, now turned towards the other party, playing with some money, which made Colville exclaim, "Well, lightly come, lightly go.—Ha! Sir Archibald, do you mean to follow those buckish young fellows' extravagant example?"

Lady Mackenzie, who had fully expected to have been treated in every sense of the word, finding she was disappointed in the first instance, said, "Mr. Douglas meant to pay for all, she was convinced."

"We should have asked him that question at the time," rejoined Mr. Colville.—
"I am afraid that excuse won't pass current now, my Lady."

Sir Archibald, who thought his honour concerned, boldly declared, "You must be joking, Lady Mackenzie."

"To be sure, Sir Archibald," cried Mrs. Tricket, "the young gentlemen did not seem sufficiently acquainted with any of us to mean

mean to treat; and I like to behave as a gentlewoman ought, wherever I am," holding out eighteen-pence for herself and daughter.

Lady Mackenzie seized the money, and demanding a shilling of Mr. Colville, made it up five, which she gave the Knight to present. Not a curtsy did this generous offering procure them, "nay, the impudent slut even turned up her nose," her Ladyship observed, declaring she was very sorry they had given half so much.

"Aye, aye, she expected us to come down half a guinea a piece," said Mr. Colville;—"more fools we if we had. However it grows late; let us be moving towards our inn;—egad! Sir Archibald, I think you were to blame, to be so shy of your young friends.—D—mme, their dinner, added to our's, would not spoil our meal. I swear I had half a mind three or four times to make the proposal."

"I am very happy ye had mair discretion, Mr. Colville; ye are not sae much accustomed

tomed as mysel to frequent people of fitch distinction ; nor do ye ken how much respect is due to their superior rank."

" May be so, my Lady ; nor do I want any ceremonious acquaintance ; but here's our inn, and I hope our dinner is ready, for my stomach begins to cry cupboard."

Upon entering their saloon, they found the cloth laid, and every other preparation made, except the dishes being upon the table, when, upon the waiter's being summoned, they were informed they must wait another quarter of an hour.

" Well, we shan't quarrel for a handful of minutes," said Mr. Colville ; " but 'tis already forty minutes past three by the Horse-Guards, the truest clock in London. However, bring me a pen, ink, and paper, that I may write to my friend the while ; 'twill serve to pass the time."

It

It certainly did with respect to himself, as he took some seconds to weigh his words before he wrote them down, chusing, as he often said, to be perfectly clear in every thing respecting business, and was informed it had struck four as he concluded. The bell was therefore applied to, and they were assured they should be served in a very few minutes, which were stretched to near half an hour.— At last dinner made its appearance.

“Thank God!” ejaculated Mr. Colville, which was plenty of grace, Mrs. Tricket observed, hungry as she was.

They were soon seated; and Mr. Colville, seizing the carving knife, cried, “I will help you all in a jiffy; the mutton looks well;” when, to their inexpressible disappointment, behold it was scarcely warm through! Mr. Colville liked it with the gravy in it; but Mrs. Tricket observed what followed the knife was more than gravy. Colville began to rave at the waiter, who alledged they had not allowed the cook sufficient time,

time, and advised having what was not sufficiently dressed, broiled, which was accordingly done.

Mrs. Tricket declared it was no more than she expected, and she believed few people understood how to order a dinner, or set out a table better than herself; when the Earl of—— dined at Counsellor M——’s, now a Lord and a Judge, he was pleased to say he had never made so good a dinner:—and I had the management of the Counsellor’s house at the time, my Lady, and my husband that now is, was his right hand, as a body may say.”

“Why, he is a knowing one, for the matter of that,” said Mr. Colville; but Lady Mackenzie, who ever held her inferiors in point of birth, except they were very much her superiors in point of fortune, in the most ineffable contempt, was shocked to death to find her avarice had led her to associate with a cook and housekeeper, if not the cast-off mistress of Counsellor M——. The discovery

covery even made her forget her hunger, which, all things considered, was rather fortunate, as the fowls were merely spring chickens, scarcely a size bigger than pigeons; and Archy would have dispatched both in ten minutes: what small part did fall to his share he devoured, bones and all.—While the empty dishes were carrying out, the party were regaled with the savoury smell of their next door neighbour's dinner as it passed their door. They had heard them come in a few minutes before.

“Those gentlemen have not been kept waiting as we were,” observed Mrs. Tricket; “I warrant me every thing they ordered is done to a turn; the very smell will tell you that.”

“Well, my good Madam, it can't be helped now,” replied Mr. Colville; “but I will be even with this jockey of a landlord for serving me such a scurvy trick. However, as we have been unfortunate in one respect, we must try to make it up in another;

ther ; so bring us pipes and tobacco, Mr. Waiter, a fresh tankard of mild ale, and a half-crown bowl of punch. Zounds ! let's enjoy ourselves for once !”

In a few seconds after this order was given, the master of the house made his appearance ; and after making a very laconic apology for the dinner not being properly cooked, said, “ As he understood the gentlemen were going to smoke, he must request they would allow the waiter to shew them into a parlour, as the smell of tobacco would prove very offensive to the company in the next room, who had but just sat down to dinner.

“ So I am to be deprived of my pipe, because some folks chuse to dine when reasonable people are going to tea ? I don't chuse to go down stairs ; my money is as good as other folks, and I have smoked in a room with a carpet before now.”

Lady

Lady Mackenzie, seriously alarmed at the bare idea of incommoding Mr. Douglas, requested Mr. Colville would give up smoking for once, except he chose to leave the room, as it was certainly very disagreeable to many people ; and, for her own part, she had never liked it, though complaisance induced her to tolerate many things in her friends.

“ Well, as your Ladyship may be more afraid of offending our neighbours than I am, not that I wish to spoil their appetites, God forbid ! so I don’t mind giving up the point for once ; but I will stick in Mr. Landlord’s ribs, I can tell him that ; so, if it an’t too great a favour, Sir, why please to send up the liquor I ordered.”

The landlord, without making any reply, left the room ; and while the punch was preparing, Mr. Colville vented his rage upon all such impudent fellows, protesting, if he came to Windsor fifty times, he would never enter either of the Castles again.

The

The Knight said smoking was totally exploded among genteel company. At that moment they heard one waiter calling to another to bring up a bottle of the best claret.

"There," said Mrs. Tricket, "that is something like."

"Very true, Ma'am," replied Mr. Colville; "and it is such extravagant young fellows as those who spoil all the innkeepers."

Lady Mackenzie started up, and made all the noise she could with her chair to drown his voice, and succeeded so far as to render his speech unintelligible to their neighbours. When the punch was brought in, she resumed her seat, and they were all requested to taste it, and give their opinion: her Ladyship was no judge—it was a liquor she seldom drank. No more did Mrs. Tricket; but this did not strike her as any thing extraordinary.

Colville,

Colville, whose temper had been very much ruffled by his repeated disappointments, told the latter, "that he had often known her drink punch at home; but some folks were sure to be fanciful, and wanted to have the management of every thing," tasting the liquor himself; then acknowledged they had not been sparing of the spirit, but devilishly so of fruit.

Margaret wished to have taken another walk, but her proposition was overruled, and the bill was ordered, as the whole party were now as anxious to leave as they had been to reach Windsor. The scroll was presented to Mr. Colville, who, looking at the sum total, 1l. 11s. 5d. rapped out a terrible oath, saying, "How the devil can they make this out?" beginning to read—Leg of mutton 7s. 6d.—Vegetables, &c. &c. 1s. 4d.—Fowls, 7s.—Ham, egg sauce, &c. &c. 2s. 4d.—Bread and beer, 3s. 8d.—Punch, 2s. 6d.—Horses, greasing carriage, coachman and footman's dinners, 6s. 6d.—Cheese, 7d.

A shame,

A shame, a most abominable shame ! Such an infamous charge he had never heard of ! and does your master suppose," looking at the waiter, " I shall put up with such an imposition ? If he does, why he will find himself mistaken, that's all ! that's all !"

The man said they had not charged him more than they did other people.

" I say you lie, fellow ; no man in his senses would pay such a bill ; you dare as well be hanged as to make such a rascally charge to those gentlemen in the next room."

" Those gentlemen's bill will be treble what your's is, Sir, I am certain, and they are only two ; you pay for twelve."

" You scoundrel, how do you make that out ?"

" Nine people and three horses."

" Get out of my sight, you insolent black-guard ! I will teach you to mention Christians and beasts together—I will !"

" I did

"I did not mean to offend, Sir," said the man, in an impudent tone, not the least awed by Colville's threats; "but I will send my master to you, if you please."

"Send him this moment, you ill-looking hound."

The man withdrew: a smothered laugh, which the gentlemen in the other room found it impossible to suppress, shocked the Knight and Lady Mackenzie beyond expression; the latter entreated Mr. Colville would not say any more; Mr. Douglas must hear every word, for he spoke so loud.

"What care I for Mr. Douglas! If he prevented me smoking my pipe, he shan't make me pay this bill; he won't give me money, rich as he is, when I want it. I care for no man. I have always paid my way through life honestly, and I won't be imposed upon."

“ I had rather pay it myself,” said Sir Archibald, “ than have any words about it ; let me go down, and settle it below.”

“ I don’t want any whispering, Sir Archibald : I brought you here to treat you, and I always keep my word ; but if the Duke of Durham himself was in the next room, he should not make me put up with an imposition : it is a downright shame, as I said before, and I will take the bill to town with me, and spend a hundred pounds in law before I will be thus bamboozled out of my money. What have we had, that would have warranted the third of such a charge ? I have bought as good a leg of mutton in Wales for a shilling ; and as for their fowls, sixpence a piece is a common price in Pembrokehire. There was not a quarter of a pound of ham ; and even that I never ordered ; and it did not cost them more than twopence. Their greens, capers, and egg sauce, might all cost sixpence.— Bread and beer at two shillings would have
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made a plenty. Cheese 7d.—there is a scandalous charge !”

Just then in came the landlord, begging to know what was the matter.

“ Oh, only look over that bill, and tell me whether you think it is a just one.”

“ The common charge,” he alledged, “ and he could not make any alterations.”

“ Then if I pay your common charge may I be d——d !” cried Colville: “ there, (flinging down a guinea) if I give you a farthing more, why the law shall force me to it, that’s all—so take it, and be thankful I let you off so well.”

The landlord laughed, turned upon his heel, and left the room, with the money upon the table. Colville raved, and stamped about till all the windows in the house shook ; and the more the Knight and Lady Mackenzie tried to pacify him, the worse he was. He did not care if all the world heard

him, and he would go and ask their neighbours if he was not in the right, for a farthing. So at last the Knight, by his wife's orders, took up the bill and the money, and went down stairs to settle it, which he did by paying the overplus, and the horses were ordered to be put to, as it was past six o'clock.

They had been fine diversion for the Baronet and Mr. Douglas," Lady Mackenzie observed; and Mrs. Tricket took an opportunity of whispering, "She had no notion of making such a pother about a few shillings, and never being asked to drink a glass of wine, which she always did in her own house."

At last they were informed the carriage was ready, and off they went, accompanied by the blessings of the waiters, ostlers, &c. who did not get a farthing from any body.—The coachman was ordered to take the other road. "They might go which road they chose," he replied; "but they would never get home that night."

His

His mistress desired him not to be impudent if he meant to continue in her service.

"I can never be upon a worse job, and I don't care how soon I get rid of it," cried the fellow.

Thus they departed, amidst the sneers and laughs of all the bystanders, among whom were Sir Charles's and Douglas's grooms. The Knight and Lady Mackenzie with difficulty concealed their vexation. Unwilling to offend Mr. Colville, they kept up a sort of desultory conversation, and affected to be of his way of thinking respecting the landlord of the Castle. Archy rode by the side of the coach in general, and was ordered to tell the coachman not to stop till he got to Hounslow, where he might give the horses a bit of hay and a drop of water, but not to give them their corn till they reached Turnham-Green, as there would not be much danger between that place and London,

should they be late. Just before they reached Cranford-Bridge, Colville offered to lay Archy a wager his horse would not pass the house.

"I will soon shew you your error, Sir," cried Archy, clapping spurs to his beast, and setting off full gallop.

"Ah! that won't do your business, young man," cried Colville, looking after him through one of the front windows. Sir Archibald looked out at the other, and her Ladyship and Margaret put their heads out at the side ones. The beast kept his gallop till they thought he had passed; but, on a sudden, stopped short, whisked into the left hand stable-yard, and left Archy sprawling on the road. They were all frightened, apprehending the awkward creature might have broke his neck, or at least some of his bones. A crowd soon assembled round, and before the coach arrived, he was upon his legs. It was now thought adviseable to give the horses hay there.

Archy

Archy, looked like death, but would not own he was hurt; he was, however, bruised, and had his left shoulder and side rubbed with warm vinegar. They stopped about a quarter of an hour, and the ladies wished to have had tea; but the gentlemen, or rather Colville, opposed the motion—it would make them too late, so a shilling's worth of brandy and water was ordered in its stead. When they set off again, Archy vowed vengeance upon his unfortunate beast, and made use of his postillion's whip with more good-will than success.

In a short time it began to grow dark.—There had been a little shower just as the sun set, but it had cleared again. The coachman grumbled and growled, swearing the horses were quite knocked up; and before they reached Brentford, the poor animals with difficulty maintained a trot, nor could his utmost exertions, both of voice and whip, get them out of a walk over the pavement. Unfortunately, they had

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scarcely

scarcely quitted it in the narrowest and dirtiest part of the town, ere they met a broad-wheeled waggon, which, owing to the road having been lately gravelled, was on the wrong side. The moment he saw the carriage advancing, the driver resumed his proper station; but as this was a work of time, the coachman stopped till the unwieldy machine had broke the way, but, that done, found it no easy matter to get his tired cattle into motion again; and if the waggoner had not, in his turn, pulled up, he must have overturned them.

The ladies, perceiving their danger, began to scream, and desired some of the bystanders to open the door, which was instantly done, and the coachman was very willing to allow them to alight. The waggoner, neither the most patient nor the most feeling of mortals, came round, and laid about the poor beasts with his long whip, swearing he would make them move if they had any life left in them. Archy was close behind the coach; but his
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miserable beast, whom he now with difficulty kept in motion, was startled by the repeated smacks of the waggoner's whip so near his nose, and fearful it would be his turn next, began to run backwards, which by no means pleased his rider, who was nearly as much fatigued as his horse. During this *fracas*, while the coach party were standing upon the foot pavement, and Archy belabouring his (to him) ungovernable beast, who should ride gently towards them but Sir Charles and Douglas! They stopped the moment they saw what was going forward, to enjoy the scene, when, owing to the dusk of the evening, and their great coats, they were not immediately recognized by the mortified set.

Lady Mackenzie first made the discovery, and whispered the Knight—"This journey was undertaken in an evil hour, my dear."

At that very moment, Archy's horse, continuing his retrograde motions in spite of his rider, sent in the window of a cobbler's stall,

which impeded his crab-like progress. This feat occasioned a general screaming cry of "Stop him, stop him," from the son of Crispin and his neighbours; while the frightened animal, alarmed at the crash he had occasioned, sprung forward so instantaneously, that he ran against Douglas, who, fearful his awkward and terrified rider might break his neck, caught his bridle, though not in time to save Archy, who once more measured his length in a sort of kennel, or drain, by the road side; and dreading to be trampled to death, as Douglas's horse was now, as well as his own, become rather unruly, he rolled over and over to get out of his way, at the risk of being smothered, before he attempted to rise. As he evidently had received no dangerous hurt, neither Douglas nor Sir Charles could refrain from joining in the general shout of mirth his fall occasioned. Between terror and rage, Archy was nearly bereft of his senses; and had no sooner recovered his legs, than he ran to his horse, whom Douglas's groom had taken from his master, and

and began to whip him with all his might, and so much at random, that he more than once struck the servant; and even the master did not entirely escape. Highly provoked by what he deemed both impudent and ungrateful, the groom swore if he came that rig again, he would ride over him.

Sir Archibald, really alarmed for his son's safety, came up to him at the moment Douglas's horse, resenting the indignity he had met with, began to rear and prance;—and fancying his unfortunate son had purposely struck him, raised a tolerably sized cane he held in his hand, which he laid about Archy's shoulders, crying—"I will learn you to endanger gentlemen's lives, I will, you scape-grace! Ask pardon this moment, or I will be the death of you!"

Archy, unconscious of what he had done, merely thought of warding off the blows.—During his correction, the two friends, finding there was room for them to pass, galloped

lopped forward to have their laugh out, while the Knight explained to his son the atrocity of his crime, telling him Mr. Douglas would have a just right to accuse him of a design against his life. Lady Mackenzie had been endeavouring to force her way through the crowd, to make her excuses to the offended party, but was too late to atone for poor Archy's mistake; she therefore seized the Knight's arm, saying, "Come along, my dear; e'en leave the gude-for-nothing varlet to pay for the window himsel, or to get away as he can."

Thus delivered up to the mercy of the surrounding populace, he enquired what damage had been done; he would give them his address, and pay any body they might send for the money. This would not do, he was informed; they preferred having the ready rhino, or they would keep his horse till the matter was settled, which he chose, and various estimates were immediately made; during which time his party walked on to the

the town's end, where they overtook their carriage. There was now room to turn about, the coachman told them, and enquired whether they chose to sleep at Brentford or in the coach: they must do one or t'other. They all persisted in their former resolution of going forward; he should bait his horses at Turnham-Green, and then they would be able to reach London with ease. Mrs. Tricket undertook to argue this point.

Sir Archibald and his Lady seized the opportunity to exchange a few words concerning the late event, declaring, there seemed a fatality respecting their *rencontres* with Mr. Douglas; it was certainly very strange he should be at Windsor on the same day, and at the same inn with them.

“Did ye perceive ony likeness of the vile Harcourt to-day, my dear?” asked my Lady; “ye could nae take yere eyes off the young mon, I perceived.”

“Why

“ Why I know it is impossible, my dear ; else I vow, that the more I looked at Mr. Douglas, the more I traced the features of Harcourt ;—he certainly walks, looks, and talks like him : nay, the resemblance even extends to that fellow’s father. Did not it strike you the same, Lady Mackenzie ? Is not Mr. Douglas the very picture of what Harcourt was when we first became acquainted at Rome.”

“ How silly ye are, my dear ! Mr. Douglas is proud, I perceived that—so far he resembled the elder Harcourt ; but he is a much finer figure than either he or his graceless son ever will be : ye may discern the inborn man of fashion, proud of his superior rank, in every action of Mr. Douglas. Besides, ye ken the utter impossibility of Harcourt and him being at all connected with each other, much less related ; and there is nae doubt but that vagabond is returned to France ; so say nae mair about him.”

Thus

Thus did her Ladyship endeavour to persuade her husband not to put any faith in his eyes, though the resemblance had struck her still more forcibly than it had done him; yet the improbability of her suspicions rendered her rather easier than she would otherwise have been. The Knight durst not persist in his opinion, and merely said, he hoped the caning he had given Archy would convince Mr. Douglas he wished to shew him every mark of respect: Peggy had seen both him and Sir Charles laugh, therefore could not suppose he was offended. The rest of the party having prevailed upon the coachman to endeavour to take them forward, they once more ascended their vehicle, and crawled on for a little time till they reached a trifling ascent, where the poor tired beasts made a full stop.

The coachman, without encouraging them to proceed, sat silently upon his box till his mistress called out to know why he did not go on. The fellow alledged the real reason,
asking,

asking, in a very furly tone, whether they chose to alight and walk up the hill, or sleep where they were? adding, it was a d——d shame to load a pair of horses in such a manner.

As there seemed no alternative, the company agreed to his first proposal, and proceeded in sullen silence till they were overtaken by Archy. It was by this time too late to see how much his dress had suffered by his last fall; and her Ladyship's first enquiry was what he had paid for the window?

"Half-a-guinea," was the reply; and he must have staid all night, and been carried before a Justice in the morning, if he had not paid the money down.

"Half-a-guinea!" repeated her Ladyship; "why did nae ye see the window was aw small panes, not worth more than a penny a piece!"

"I had not lost the use of my eyes," growled out Archy, "but they got a fellow
to

to swear he would not put it all to rights for less."

Her Ladyship, unwilling to say much just then, ordered the dirty beast, as she called him, to make the best of his way home.

Archy took her at her word, and began to whip and spur once more, till Mr. Colville told him to beware of the third time. Meanwhile, they continued walking gently forward, every now and then looking behind them in expectation of their vehicle.

Mrs. Tricket began to complain of fatigue: this was what she had never been used to. No carriage was either to be seen or heard; what could have become of it? They thought they recollected its being very near when they stopped to speak to Archy.—
"Surely the fellow had not slipped by!"

Mrs. Tricket said he was very capable of so doing. The gentlemen hallooed, but received

ceived no answer; and, to mend the matter, it began to rain.

“ Oh Heavens !” cried Mrs. Tricket, “ all my clothes will be spoiled !”

“ No, no, Ma’am,” rejoined Colville, “ only those you have on, let what will befall you.”

“ This is no time for joking, Sir,” replied the enraged lady.

“ I hear a carriage,” cried Sir Archibald.

This welcome information revived their drooping spirits, when unfortunately it proved to be a return post-chaise coming towards them; they called to the driver, and asked him if he had met an empty coach just before.

“ Sure enough, masters,” was the reply; “ ’tis at Turnham-Green by this time.”

Was ever any thing more provoking, as this was a proof, they agreed, that the horses
were

were not so tired as the coachman had represented. Mrs. Tricket would have engaged the lad to convey her and her daughter to Turnham-Green; but it was more than his place was worth, he said, and drove on, observing, if they did not put their best foot foremost, they would have wet jackets before they overtook the carriage.

His prediction was almost immediately verified, as he was scarcely out of sight before a loud clap of thunder announced a heavy and approaching storm. Mrs. Tricket, really terrified, screamed out, seizing hold of the Knight, and protesting she should die.— A second clap literally deprived her of her senses; and Sir Archibald, no longer able to support her, could only break her fall. No house was near, nor a drop of water to be had. The other ladies did all in their power to recover her: the daughter declared she was dead. Not a little alarmed, Colville raised her head, and a violent shower coming to their assistance, in a short time she recovered

recovered her speech; but it was much longer ere she could move forward, even assisted by the two gentlemen. At length they got into motion. Mrs. Tricket attributed her fit to going without her tea, and prognosticated this jaunt would prove the death of her. Lady Mackenzie, not in a much better temper, reminded this delicate lady that she and her daughter should be equal sufferers. Mrs. Tricket observed, that people accustomed to ride in a carriage were much more liable to catch cold than those who were forced to walk in all weathers, from the want of one. Lady Mackenzie, violently nettled, asked if Counsellor ——— kept *her* a carriage.

This retort came so home to the lady's feelings, that she let go the gentlemen's arms, and bounced along unsupported, declaring she did not understand what her Ladyship meant by such base insinuations.

Colville laughed, and tried to restore peace: he was sure they had no intention of offending

offending each other, but was happy their little quarrel had helped to quicken their pace; "So now let us forget all our misfortunes, for here are some houses I take to be Turnham-Green."

Mrs. Tricket hoped she should not meet with any of her acquaintance; she would not be seen in such a pickle for ten thousand pounds. However, as there was no remedy, they walked into the Pack Horse, where they had agreed the coachman should stop. It was now near eleven. Archy, they found, had proceeded without stopping. The landlady immediately enquired how many beds they should want, and what they chose to take; whether they supped, &c. &c. Mrs. Tricket told her they were going forward.

"The coachman said otherwise, Ma'am," was the reply.

"I like his assurance," cried the haughty dame; "I suppose he thinks I am to stop where he chuses: thank God, it is not come

to

to that yet. Send him here, pray, good woman."

He soon obeyed the summons; and after scolding him very severely for having dared to leave them in the manner he had done, she desired him to make haste, and put to—they should not be at home by midnight.

"No," replied the man, "I don't think you will; and I shall think myself very fortunate if I get home by this time to-morrow."

"None of your airs, fellow, I desire:—what, because I told you I did not wish your master should know I had been out, you fancy I am afraid of you: you never was more mistaken, take my word for it; so prepare to take me to London this moment, or you shall find the odds of it. I shan't pay seven shillings for the hire of the coach, when half that sum will do, and sleep on the road into the bargain; don't you believe it? Though, Heaven knows, I now shiver every
joint

joint of me ; but if it is God's will I should die, let it be in my own bed at least."

She paused, not doubting but that either her threats, or his compassion at hearing she was so ill, would induce the man to comply with her request ; but, to her infinite mortification, the hardened wretch only grinned, telling her if she was determined to go home, she had better hire horses at once, for he should not stir out of the stable before eight o'clock the next morning for any body.

" There certainly never was your fellow for impudence, man," exclaimed his enraged mistress.—" *Your* horses, forsooth ! you will never be worth a pair as long as you live, and it would be a pity you should."

" They are as much mine as your's, Madam ; you only hire them, and I have the care of them ; therefore 'tis I that am answerable for them to my master : if I kill them, he will blame me, not you."

Colville

Colville tried to convince the man he would lose his place if he did not oblige his mistress.

“Look ye, Sir, I would have got home if I could; they are a pair of very good horses, or they would not have brought you thus far on your way to town; but three or four and forty miles a day, with such a load, is too much, and double what job horses are required to do. Mr. Tricket only drives his carriage from Christmas to Midsummer, and he is one of the wrong sort to pay for a horse, if I was to kill one; though it would be but lawful after what they have done.—I know I shan’t affront my master; and as for Mrs. Tricket, she knows I am not afraid of her, if she comes to that; so the short and the long of it is, gentlefolks, I won’t go to London to-night,” and away he walked.

Mrs. Tricket burst into tears, declaring she never was so shamefully treated in her life; but the fellow should never drive her again
if

if there was another coachman to be had for love or money."

Spirited as that resolution was, Mr. Colville observed it would not get them to London, therefore it was necessary to come to some determination. Sir Archibald having once, in consequence of a cold he had caught, been obliged to call in a physician, though he had almost as soon have died as have parted with his guineas, dreading either himself, wife, or daughter might suffer through wet cloaths, called for the brandy bottle, and advised the whole party to take a glass, which they did, to keep the cold out; and as they all wished to sleep at home, the landlady was sent for to know what would be the *cheapest* method of performing this short journey. Mine hostess, not having formed a very high opinion of her guests from what she had overheard, and convinced she should not get much out of them if they did stay, told them there were plenty of stages, and perhaps they might prevail upon one of the

masters of them to take them to town, late as it was, if they gave him a trifle over and above the accustomed fare, or they might send to Brentford for post-chaises.

“ A stage would be far preferable,” Lady Mackenzie observed, “ as they should run infinitely less chance of being robbed.”

All were exactly of her opinion; a coachman was sent for, and Sir Archibald asked what he would have to take them all to town.

“ One guinea; for he must lose his night’s rest, overwork his horses, at the risk of losing them, &c. &c. and he would not stir a step for less.”

They looked at each other for a few seconds in silence, which Colville broke, saying, “ Half the money was enough: however, they would give half-a-crown a piece.”

The

The man wished them a good night, and left the room. After various calculations respecting beds, supper, &c. his exorbitant demand was agreed to, and he received an order to get ready as soon as possible, and, in a short time, they were once more upon the road. No one was inclined to talk, and they would probably have reached London in silence, if Mrs. Tricket had not exclaimed, just as they drove into Kensington—

“ Well, what fools we all were, to be sure ! ”

Not very much flattered by this polite remark, Lady Mackenzie begged an explanation.

"Why, we might have had these horses put to the other coach, my Lady, which would have been fifty times more genteel, and I should have saved three-and-sixpence. Besides, I could have forced that fellow of a coachman to have come forward with the

H 2 horses.

horses, as they would have had nothing to drag."

All this was true, and they blamed themselves very much for not having made the reflection in time, each wishing to part with some degree of politeness. By the time they reached Hyde-Park turnpike, it was near one; upon being stopped for payment, the coachman referred the man to his passengers: they one and all declared he had no right to oblige them to pay this miserable twopence, as he had agreed to set them down at their own doors for a guinea; while he, in his turn, swore he would not move a yard further if they did not free him through the gate. Mrs. Tricket only wished her husband had been there for the impudent fellow's sake.

The Knight, anxious to get home, put an end to the dispute, as he had done at Windsor, and they proceeded first to his house, where they took leave of Mrs. and

Miss

Miss Tricket. Lady Mackenzie proposed retiring immediately, as the safest way to prevent catching cold; but Colville gave her so many broad hints concerning supper, some bread and cheese, &c. that a bottle of wine was reluctantly brought out.

Archy, they were informed, had been at home and in bed two hours or more; and her Ladyship was vastly happy when Colville proposed following his example.— They did not meet again till near eleven in the forenoon; breakfast was hurried over upon their guest's account, who was going out; and as soon as they were *en famille*, her Ladyship observed their jaunt had been far from amusing: she would never join any more such parties to oblige any one. What they had spent altogether, including Archy's misfortune, would have bought her a very handsome gown. They were debating the point, and calculating the unnecessary expence they had put themselves to, when John came into the breakfast-parlour.

"Mercy upon me, my dear bairn, wha would have thought of seeing ye fae early!"

"I was anxious to enquire where, and how you had passed the night, Ma'am."

"Why, Johnny, did ye ken we were out yesterday?"

"I heard so, Ma'am, and also that your son Archy was near making Mr. Douglas break his neck, because that gentleman was obliging enough to endeavour to prevent his meeting with such an accident by stopping his horse."

"Hold, my dear Johnny, bad as the worthless loon is, and has nae dared shew his face this morning, he is nae guilty of the charge ye have brought against him," relating what had passed at Brentford, and protesting Archy had no intention to endanger Mr. Douglas's, or any body's life. She acknowledged they were highly to suffer the awkward being to stick himself upon a horse, and requested to know from whom he derived his information respecting the unlucky affair."

"From

“ From the Duke of Durham, Ma’am, at whose house I supped last night.”

“ Hoot, Johnny ! ye frighten me oot of my wits ! the sorry loon will be the death of me, I foresee that ; what did his Grace say ? I dread to ask.”

“ I find, Ma’am, you are conscious your son deserves horfewhipping : but Mr. Douglas, with his accustomed generosity, made so light of the business, that the Duke merely laughed at his account of your mishaps at Brentford.”

He was proceeding, when Colville returned in no small bustle, and having just said, “ How are you, Mr. Mackenzie ? ” looking at the Knight, he proceeded—“ There has been the devil to pay, and no pitch hot in Hanover-street.”

“ You don’t say so ! ” cried my Lady ;—“ pray let’s hear what has happened.”

“ Why, Tricket came home to dinner yesterday, and found an empty house ; burn my old wig, but I had like to have got my-

self affronted, and he swears he will kick Madam out of doors;—for do you know the jade took us all in; she is not his wife at last!”

“Not his wife!” screamed Lady Mackenzie, “not his wife! and have I been seen in company with a kept Madam? Give me leave to tell you, Mr. Colville, my character is not to be sported with thus.”

John with difficulty kept his countenance.—The Knight said, in a grave tone, “You ought to have been more particular in your enquiries, Sir, before you introduced the woman to Lady and Miss Mackenzie.”

“I should expire with shame, if I thought Mr. Douglas or Sir Charles Creighton kenned the worthless body,” said her Ladyship.

“They hinted your being in strange company,” rejoined John, wishing to add to their mortification; “but I was at a loss to comprehend their meaning—it is now perfectly elucidated; but pray how came you to make a party with this *chaste* lady?”

Colville

Colville related the why and the wherefore ; protesting he thought the slut was an honest woman, or he should not have proposed making use of her equipage.

“ Upon my soul you were all very rightly served,” cried John.—“ You may often command a carriage upon such terms : to save a guinea you have commenced an acquaintance, nay, laid yourself under an obligation to a pettyfogging attorney’s kept mistress, who will no doubt salute you the first time she meets you in public, and thus publish your intimacy to the whole town.— I cannot stop now to point out all the advantages you will derive from so honourable a connexion, formed through such generous motives, so must leave you to rejoice over your good fortune,” quitting the room immediately ; and nothing but the hopes she entertained of bringing about a match between Archy and her miserly guest’s daughter prevented Lady Mackenzie from coming to an open rupture with Mr. Colville

CHAP. V.

MERE chance, added to a wish to avoid a riotous tavern party, had induced Douglas, who never had seen Windsor, to engage Sir Charles to accompany him thither on the before-mentioned day. Several delicate hints of Lady Isabella's had almost worked a reformation in his conduct; he still wished to be thought the most fashionable man in London, but not the most fashionable rake; as he was convinced the newspaper eulogiums, so frequently bestowed upon him, were not likely to raise him in her esteem. His own good sense had always led him to condemn excess, which he was now ashamed of having ever committed:

mitted; he frankly acknowledged to Lady Isabella that he had wilfully suffered himself to be misled, and should most likely have continued to furnish anecdotes for the annals of folly to his dying day, if his guardian angel, under her resemblance, had not stepped forward to warn him of his absurdity. His accidental rencontre with the Mackenzies had afforded him amusement; and he and Sir Charles had galloped all the way from Brentford to avoid being wet, they had not been able to talk over the scene they were recapitulating to the Duke of Northampton, when John Mackenzie was announced, and thus learned (though Sir Charles, who was the historian, did not give way to his satirical vein in his presence) where his family had been, and what had befallen them on their return.

As much amused as they already had been, he added to their diversion by his ludicrous remarks, and determined to wait upon his father and mother in the morning, in

hopes of frightening them a little, as he thought they deserved some punishment for their absurdities, and was sensible, though neither his kind patron nor Sir Charles precisely said so, that they had made themselves exceedingly ridiculous; and he rejoiced to find their avarice had brought its own punishment along with it, as this adventure would indubitably prevent them from borrowing a carriage again, except they were better acquainted with the owner than they were with Mrs. Tricket.

Lady Isabella always spent the summer, autumn, and frequently the Christmas holidays with her grandmother at Kinross. She had informed Douglas of her expectations to set out for Scotland about the middle of June, as her guardian was coming to town for the birth-day, and she was to accompany him down upon his return. She did not entertain any hopes that the General would consent to their union, knowing (in addition to his ancient prejudice against the Duke of Durham

Durham) that he had in contemplation a match between her and his only son, now on his travels. She thought they must wait her coming of age to unite their destinies; as she was very averse to a private marriage, though fully determined to part with her liberty in favour of no one else. This she repeatedly assured her impatient lover, who sometimes thought of entreating his uncle to interest himself in his behalf, which he considered would be of little avail; and he dared not even consult his friend, Sir Charles Creighton, knowing Isabella did not wish any one should share his confidence. There were moments when he thought he would wait upon General Clare as soon as he came to London, and endeavour, by the liberality of his offers respecting settlements, &c. to obtain his consent; but when he reflected that that gentleman wished both the title of Donalbain and her Ladyship's fortune should centre in his own family, he easily guessed he should only afford him an opportunity of expatiating upon
former

former events, without reaping any benefit from his proposals.

The day after his Windfor excursion he fully expected to receive a letter from her Ladyship;—he was engaged to an evening party at Lady Dunraven's, but the moment it was dusk hastened into Mount Street, and perceived no signal; nevertheless he went in, and found, to his infinite disappointment, that there was no letter, which Mrs. Macallister, perceiving his chagrin, attributed to General Clare's arrival. This information increased, if possible, his vexation, and he returned home to dress for his evening visit in so bad a temper, that his valet did not know what to make of him.

At Lady Dunraven's he, as usual, met a host of fashionable folks, and was particularly noticed by her fair self, and rallied upon his visible absence of mind. He endeavoured to rouse himself, and had recourse to the common excuse for disorders of the
mind,

mind, by attributing his want of spirits to indisposition. At her desire he had taken a seat next her Ladyship; and though seldom more inattentive, could not help remarking that he seemed particularly to excite the observation of an elderly gentleman, who was conversing with Lord Monteith, though his eyes were continually directed towards him. Curiosity induced him to ask Lady Dunraven who he was.

“A proud old Scotchman,” was the reply, “who has a peculiar antipathy to young and handsome men of your rank and expectations, because he has, if we may believe report, a young and handsome, but, at all events, rich ward, whom he intends for his son; and though the girl has not yet been presented, and he immures her for eight, sometimes nine months of the year in Scotland, yet he dreads a rival to his hopeful heir in every elegant man of fashion he sees. Besides, he has a peculiar aversion to the clan of Douglas; I dare say you
may

may have heard your uncle mention General Clare."

"Frequently," replied Douglas;—"but since his rich ward never appears in public, surely he need not dread any obstacle to his designs. Is his son an amiable man?"

"I am sure I shall make you anxious to become acquainted with him, when I tell you he bears no small resemblance to Lord Dunraven; like myself, Lady Isabella Kinross bids fair to become the victim of family arrangements: but perhaps she does not possess my sensibility, in which case she will not be so much to be pitied."

Douglas, affecting not to understand this appeal to his gallantry, continued artfully to question her Ladyship; from whom he learned that the General was far from rich, and had long intended to repair the broken fortunes of his house by the projected alliance between his son and his ward.—Her Ladyship proceeded, saying—

"The Honourable Mr. Duncombe was joined in the trust with himself, but had, unfortunately

unfortunately for his grand-daughter, been dead some years, and the management of her affairs devolving to General Clare, he meant to make the most of his power, at least so says Lord Monteith."

Douglas, greatly agitated, under pretence of increasing indisposition, soon retired; and, rendered desperate by what he had heard, sat down to entreat his Isabella would consider the numerous obstacles which might intervene to render them for ever miserable, should they suffer themselves to be separated. He mentioned what he had learned from Lady Dunraven, and did not hesitate to pronounce the General would force her into his son's arms rather than permit so rich a prize to escape, protesting, were he permitted to make the proposal, he would offer to resign her fortune to Mr. Clare to ensure the General's consent to their marriage; but as that could not be done with any degree of delicacy or propriety, he requested, as she valued his peace of mind, that she would permit him to venture

venture having the banns published under their simple names, which might pass unnoticed, and thus enable them to be married at the church of the parish in which she resided. But should any sinister accident excite the General's suspicions, they must brave the storm, and wait till the law permitted her to dispose of her hand, untroubled by a selfish guardian.

Having argued the point with his usual energy, and entered into what he thought necessary details respecting settlements, &c. he concluded with entreating a speedy, and he hoped a favourable answer. He then, late as it was, hurried into Mount Street.—Mrs. Macallister was just going to bed, but promised to wait upon her Ladyship as early as she could do it with prudence.

Douglas's anxiety deprived him of sleep, appetite, and almost of reason, as he foresaw the General would never rest till he had bestowed his ward upon his son; and determined,

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mined, if she hesitated to subscribe to his plan, to leave England on the same day she left London, and endeavour to banish her fascinating image from his mind.

Lady Isabella was not less agitated after she had read his letter :—his arguments were unanswerable ; and without allowing herself time to reflect, the dread of her guardian, and abhorrence of Mr. Clare, induced her to consent to his proposal, gently reminding him what would be the probable consequence of the failure of his plan, but assuring him no power on earth, let what would intervene, should ever force her to give her hand to any other man.

Douglas's joy, upon the receipt of this epistle, more than equalled his past anxiety : he thought himself the happiest of mortals, and made a vow, in return for her condescending goodness, never to think of any other woman while she remained single, should any untoward circumstance prevent
them

them from plighting their faith at the altar, unknown to General Clare. His first determination was, not to trust any soul with their secret till the very last moment; and he exhorted her Ladyship in his letter of unbounded acknowledgments, to form the same resolution, and to laugh at the names, should they happen to strike the ears of any one present, as he would take care even the clergyman should only suppose them people in a very inferior station.

He next reflected that they did not reside in the same parish; and to be asked in two churches would be running a very great risk. This was a serious difficulty, when it occurred to him that it would be necessary to take a house as soon as he was married; therefore it was only hiring one immediately in the parish where her Ladyship resided, and sleeping in it the night before the publication of the banns: this would be acting as many thousands had done before him, and this he resolved to do. As the house was to be provided

provided in two days (for he determined not to let one Sunday elapse before he tempted the General to forbid what he hoped soon to put it out of his power to prevent), he set out to take a survey, very much wishing to have had it in his power to consult his Isabella. Limited as he was to one parish, he reflected that it would be an easy matter to remove, should she not approve of the situation. He was fortunate enough to meet with a house in Grosvenor Square, which he instantly secured, merely requesting the landlord would not mention his name till he took possession. — This was readily promised, and an upholsterer was set to work, with orders to have it completely furnished in a fortnight, but to put up one bed that very day. The certainty of prompt payment facilitated every thing; a room was totally furnished before evening, and two women servants, engaged by the landlord, entered upon their new service at the same hour. He wrote her Ladyship a short account of these transactions, and had the pleasure to find his
ideas

ideas met her approbation, and that she was nearly as anxious as himself for their success.

Fortunately Mrs. Shenstone seldom went to her parish church, St. James's being her favourite place of worship. Nevertheless, the bare possibility of her going thither during the ensuing month, as she never missed divine service, made both Douglas and her Ladyship very uneasy; and he reflected they must indubitably have been discovered, had they attempted to have had the banns published in both churches, as Mrs. Shenstone's intimate knowledge of their names must have led her to form suspicions that would have terminated in the overthrow of their plan.

On the Saturday evening he waited upon the clerk of his new parish, dressed so as not to excite curiosity, and was promised his request should be complied-with the next day. He was prepared to answer any questions the clerk might put, but two half-crown pieces
(he

(he dared not offer more) put an effectual check to his doubts if he entertained any; and Douglas had the pleasure to find their names passed unnoticed the first and second times of asking: still he was in continual dread that some unforeseen event might blast all his prospects when he least expected it. Though the house was nearly ready, and all his other plans were formed, so as to exclude lawyers from his confidence, he employed the most eminent to draw a mutual agreement, destined to form the basis of future settlements, and comprehending the most generous arrangements respecting her Ladyship's fortune. This he sent her through the medium of Mrs. Macallister, and received it again signed, as he requested.

Not a day passed without communicating their hopes and fears to each other; and though Douglas, to avoid suspicion, gave up no engagements, he never missed visiting Mount Street during the evening:—it may

therefore be supposed he had very little time to dedicate to Albertine, who, notwithstanding his short visits, and cool indifferent behaviour, still flattered herself she should in time make an impression upon his heart. His reserve she placed wholly to the score of pride, therefore thought, if she was once introduced at St. James's, which the Duke and Mr. Douglas had talked of when she first came to London, she should eclipse all the British *Belles*, and thus render her guardian vain of wearing the chains of a first rate toast; but conscious her wishes to dazzle the drawing-room with her splendour, would not meet the approbation of either her mother or the Count de St. Mars, whom the former always consulted, she had recourse to Miss Frazer, who often visited her by her brother's desire, as the Colonel thought her a gay, unaffected girl, likely to make him happy, and her large fortune brought Lord Everly into his way of thinking.

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VOL.

Miss Frazer communicated her desire to appear at the ensuing birth-day to her father and brother, who thought it very natural, and proposed, admitting neither her aunt (for such they presumed her mother to be) nor guardian made any objection, Lady Wellsborough, the Viscount's sister, should present her to their Majesties.

The Colonel immediately waited upon Douglas to mention the matter; and as he thought him a very eligible match for his ward, easily guessing why he wished to humour her thirst for public notice, he assured him he could have no objection to Mademoiselle de Valcerné's following the bent of her inclinations; to consult him was mere matter of form—her aunt must decide, as being far the most proper person.

Having thus far succeeded, the Colonel found little difficulty, seconded by his aunt and sister, to obtain Madame de L'Epinois's consent. Indeed she had very little power

over her daughter, had she been inclined to controul her taste for pleasure, which was very far from being the case.

The Count de St. Mars remained neuter in the business; like Douglas, he wished to see her well married, and thought Colonel Frazer could not have taken a more effectual method to ingratiate himself in her esteem.— The birth-day fell on the Friday before Douglas's banns were to be published for the last time, and he hoped, as he wrote his Isabella word, he should never appear at another without her. Ever elegant in his appearance, he was one of the most striking figures in the drawing-room, and much more noticed and admired than his ward, notwithstanding the glitter of her attire, and the extraordinary pains she had taken to ensure universal admiration.

The idea she entertained of appearing superior to all around her, banished that timidity generally attendant upon a first appearance

pearance in such a circle ; and as she was soon known to possess a very large fortune, many gentlemen, who wanted rich wives, paid her homage with their eyes, and were not sparing in their encomiums upon her person, taste in dress, &c. Altogether, the young lady thought her charms had produced the desired effect, and retired with Lady Wellborough and Miss Frazer in very high spirits, certain the newspapers would extol her beauty, dress, &c. in the most flattering terms. She dined at Lord Everly's, as she was to accompany the ladies to the ball in the evening.

Colonel Frazer, who, if not a declared, was a very gallant lover, paid her a vast many compliments, and found it no very difficult task to keep her in high good-humour both with herself and him ; still, in spite of the vanity that prompted her to wish to number among her slaves every man she saw, she could neither look at, nor listen to, any other when Douglas was present, who, every one

said, was the handsomest man in the circle.— He had favoured her with several glances, but not very expressive of admiration, and had merely addressed her, in common with the ladies of her party. Knowing herself to be an excellent dancer, she hoped to make a more favourable impression upon him in the ball-room ; but, to her infinite mortification, he did not make his appearance in the evening. However, she rather got the better of her disappointment upon being led out by a Captain in the Guards, who was also an Irish Earl, and, next to Douglas, one of the handsomest men she had ever seen ; and though she owed his hand to the Lord Chamberlain, she was not less flattered that so fine a fellow had fallen to her lot. Besides, he was an adept in the science of adulation, possessed an uncommon share of assurance, and assailed his fair partner with so strong a dose of flattery, that she left St. James's, convinced Douglas was the most insensible of mortals, and Lord Fitzcarryl a very amiable man, and possessed of an uncommon share of understanding.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

THE last Sunday arrived, and Douglas, to be perfectly satisfied, attended divine service in an obscure part of the church, particularly wishing to escape unnoticed, and had the satisfaction to hear the banns published for the third and last time between George Douglas and Isabella Kinross, without any one stepping forward to forbid them. He returned home, transported to think every obstacle was now removed that threatened to impede their union. He had requested his Isabella would permit him to engage the clergyman to join their hands on the Monday morning; but she had

alleged it would be more prudent to postpone the ceremony to the Tuesday, as her music-master always came at nine o'clock on the Monday, and generally staid till she was summoned to breakfast. Thus it was agreed, and Douglas gave the clergyman and clerk proper notice of their intentions on the Sunday evening, who both promised to meet them in the church by eight o'clock in the morning, presuming, from the earliness of the hour, that they were going to spend the day in the country.

Her Ladyship promised to make her escape the moment she was up, in a dress not likely to excite suspicions of her rank, which might induce the clergyman to ask questions they might be puzzled to answer.

Sir Charles Creighton, Douglas had determined, should give the bride away, though he did not mean to let either him or Mrs. Macallister, whom he intended should be present, into their secret till late on the Monday

Monday evening. He wrote an account of every thing to his Isabella, who informed him, by their joint friend, that should nothing unforeseen occur, all should be as he had decided; desiring him, nevertheless, to call in Mount Street on the Monday, lest it should be necessary to make any alteration in their present arrangements. She did not at present foresee there would be occasion to write again.

Douglas, unusually restless, and particularly interested in securing such a treasure as he deemed Lady Isabella, took Mount Street in his way home from his morning's ride in Hyde-Park, and contrary to his expectation, saw the accustomed signal, denoting a letter, in the window. He rode on till out of sight of the house; then dismounting, gave his horse to his groom, and sent him home, while he hastened back to Mrs. Macallister's, who instantly gave him a scrap of paper unsealed, containing a few lines, wrote with a pencil, to the following purport:—

“ I have not a moment to spare ; we are discovered ; the carriage is now at the door to convey me to Kinross ; General Clare is come to hurry us away, in consequence of an express he has received. This is his ostensible reason, but there needs no great penetration to guess the real cause of our precipitate departure. I dare not say more ; only act with precaution, my dearest D——, and believe me your sincere

“ ISABELLA.”

“ Confound all this treachery,” exclaimed Douglas, fixing his eyes upon Mrs. Macallister, whose looks betrayed signs of guilt. Indeed she seemed to participate in his distress.

“ I was afraid all was not right, Sir ; one of the house-maids brought that note about eleven o’clock, and told me Lady Isabella and Mrs. Macpherson were going out of town, and that I was to give it to the French lady her Ladyship privately protected.

tested. I understood the hint, and am sorry to find my suspicions verified."

Douglas hardly stopped to hear the conclusion of her speech before he left the shop, and was hurrying home, when in Dover Street he overtook his groom talking to a friend. He endeavoured to conceal his agitation, made him a sign to approach,—mounted his horse, ordering him once more home, and to let the Duke know he should not return to dinner. He then made for the great North road, determined to pursue his Isabella to Scotland, if he did not overtake her before, and to bring her back, or lose his life in the attempt; without reflecting that he was alone, unarmed, and that the General probably travelled with a numerous suite, not only to protect, but to guard his ward, if occasion required. He reached Barnet before he thought of making any enquiries, and was turning into the first inn just as a number of returned post horses came

up to the gate. He stopped one of the drivers, and asked where he had been.

“To Hatfield,” was the reply; and perceiving Douglas had rode very fast, he asked him, in his turn, why he enquired.

“He had business of importance with the gentleman he presumed they had drove.—Did he know where the party were taken up in London?”

“In Hertford Street, he understood.”

“That was enough,” Douglas said;—“they were the people he wanted; what advance did he think they had made? and did he know where it was supposed they would sleep?”

One of the servants had told him at Biggleswade, which he supposed they would reach about eight o'clock, if they did not stop to dine. They had taken a snap at Hatfield, which they left about half past four:—it was now near six.

Douglas

Douglas was rejoiced to think he was so near them, and that they did not mean to travel all night. He rewarded the lad for his intelligence, and finding his horse in good spirits, determined to push on the other nine miles, forming plans all the way he rode. He left his horse at Hatfield, without asking a single question concerning the party he was in pursuit of; but a difficulty arising at Stevenage about accommodating him (as they had done at the last stage, where he had left a horse worth half a dozen such as they had entrusted him with), he desired a postillion might attend him.

Accordingly a spruce little fellow, about five-and-twenty, prepared to accompany him; and as soon as he was out of the town, finding he should be in time, Douglas allowed himself a little more scope for reflection, and entered into conversation with his companion, whose shrewd remarks prepossessed him so much in his favour, that he frankly promised him a handsome gratuity if

he would assist him in conveying a note to the young lady, of whom they had been talking.

The fellow swore it should be done ; and he would not accept a single farthing if he did not succeed, and bring him an answer into the bargain. That Douglas told him he was afraid would be impossible, as she had been hurried from London merely to keep her out of his way.

“ Then if she is but agreeable to it, we will force her back again, Sir,” replied the fellow.

The pleasure the man had in forming schemes for this enterprize, and his ridiculous remarks, excited Douglas’s mirth more than once. He was acquainted with every body upon the road ; his father and mother kept the turnpike gate ; and as for the girls at the inn at Biggleswade, he could make them do whatever he ordered.

It

It was dusk when they reached that town, and the postillion desired Douglas to remain at a small public-house, while he went to deliver his note, and bring him word how the cat jumped.

Douglas entreated him to be cautious, and wished to have given him a vast many instructions; but the lad, having sworn he need be under no apprehensions, flew away, determined to be guided by circumstances, and to gain all the honour of the achievement, if possible, his own way. He soon reached the inn, and understood from the waiter that the General and the two ladies were just going to supper; he therefore gave both him and the chambermaid a hint (backed by a promise of a reward) how they could assist him in his plan, and thus easily secured their services in consequence. Having borrowed a coat of his friend, he waited upon the company in his stead, and took every opportunity, when unperceived by the General and Mrs. Macpherson, to

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make signs to her Ladyship, looking at the note at the same time. He soon perceived she understood him, and with difficulty concealed her agitation; but he thought he read in her looks that he must not attempt to give it her yet.

Supper being over, and finding he must retire, he said, addressing Mrs. Macpherson, and looking expressively at her Ladyship,—“I am to send the chamber-maid in half an hour, I think you said, Ma’am?”

“I gave no such orders, young man,” said Mrs. Macpherson.

“I beg pardon, Ma’am; it was certainly the lady in the next room.”

So saying he retired, convinced that her Ladyship guessed he had some meaning; and, telling the chamber-maid to be in the way, he ran to the house where he had left Douglas, who impatiently exclaimed, the moment he saw him, “Well, my good fellow, what luck?”

“Why

“Why I hope we shall be a match for the old Don yet ; but here is your note ; I could not deliver that : however, I will be sworn the lady and I understand one another, so you need not be uneasy : and by God, I would ride to the devil at any time to serve a handsome girl.”

“I am convinced you would ; but tell me what——”

“I have no time now,” interrupted the lad, “have patience till we are upon the road ;—the lady will be able to tell you how we managed matters, and you will like the story better from her mouth than mine. But here, I want you,” taking him to a greater distance.—“If we attempt to set off in a post-chaise,” he went on, “we are taken, and the lady is not equipped for riding on horse-back ; but I suppose you would not mind if you was to return in a little jockey cart ?”

“Any how, my good fellow, so we do but get off ; but do you think we shall be so fortunate ?”

“ I never failed in a good trick in my life,” cried the lad ; “ only come along.”

Douglas followed him into a little orchard at the back of a small house, where they found a horse, which he seized by the fore-top, saying, “ This is the old fellow who will carry you to the world’s end,” leading the beast towards a stable.

“ No noise—they are all quiet in bed : this fellow’s master is a butcher, and a cousin of mine—a hearty blade as ever broke bread, and who won’t swear I have stole his horse. By the way, you must promise to pay for him if you kill him—he an’t worth above five guineas, though he will beat the best in England.”

“ For God’s sake take care what you are about !” said Douglas.—“ As for paying for the beast, here is a proof of my intentions,” putting a handful of guineas into the lad’s hands.

“ I can feel here are enough to purchase a dozen such old rips, and depend upon it,

I run

I run no risk," fetching out the harness, which he clapped on, and shewed Douglas which way to lead him, while he ran to a shed, and very gently brought out a small chaise-cart, to which they put the horse, unperceived by any one, and then led him to the corner of a bye lane, where the postillion told his generous employer to wait his return, and pray for his success; and at all events, it was but right to be prepared.

Every moment seemed an hour to the anxious and impatient Douglas: what account must he give of himself, should any one pass who knew the horse and cart, and were to ask how they came to be in his possession? How could he account for the circumstance?

The church clock struck eleven while he remained in this irksome suspense; at last he heard footsteps advancing towards him, and soon discovered two figures; but his heart sunk within him upon finding that one

was

was his confidential friend, and the other, to appearance, a lad much about his own size. He concluded the former's plan had proved unsuccessful, and blamed himself for giving the fellow *carte blanche*, when the one he did not know said in French "*Qui va là ?*"

"Oh Heavens, my Isabella!" he exclaimed, "am I so blessed!" catching her in his arms, and lifting her into the carriage.— Then jumping in himself, the postillion gave him the reins and his whip, saying, "Make the best of your way; never stop to bait, but go on as if the devil drove you till I overtake you: I will prevent your being pursued.

Douglas longed to ask a few questions; but knowing the consequence of every moment, he set off as fast as possible with his adored Isabella. The old horse went rather stiff at first, but in less than a mile he began to mend prodigiously, and to get on at a great rate. They saw nothing of the postillion, nor could they conceive what he meant by
telling

telling them he would prevent their being followed. As soon as their first fears and agitation had subsided, or rather given place to mutual joy, Douglas enquired how her Ladyship had made her escape, and whether she thought it probable she should be missed immediately.

She informed him that the postillion had waited at supper, and knew he had contrived to make her comprehend by his looks that he had some other meaning when he mentioned the chamber-maid, who came in at the expiration of the half hour, under the pretended mistake, when she took that opportunity to go and see the bed-rooms, dreading Mrs. Macpherson would offer to accompany her, who was fortunately engaged in deep discourse with the General. The maid had a man's great coat and hat ready, which she put on the moment she was without the door, and accompanied by the postillion, she instantly left the house. The maid was to say, when summoned, as she doubtless would

soon would be, that she had come down to the room door again with the young lady, who of course would be enquired after in the space of five minutes.

This Douglas knew was but too probable: in continual dread, therefore, they drove on three hours or more, without hearing any one behind them, and agreed the moment they did, that her Ladyship (notwithstanding her disguise) should jump out, and hide herself till their pursuers were passed.

Day began to dawn as they drove through Hatfield, and the horse began to go very heavy in hand. They were sorry they had not taken a post-chaise, as they found they should not be able to get on much farther without baiting the poor beast; and wondered what could have become of the postillion, and whether they should see him again.— At last, when they almost despaired of it, they were agreeably surprised by seeing him

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him ride out of a lane just before them, which led down into a village. His first words were—"What, no farther than this? Zounds! flog the old fellow up!"

"Are we pursued?" enquired both at once.

"That you most certainly are," replied the lad; "but I hope I have given them their belly full of pursuit."

"Who set out after us?" asked Douglas.

"Two footmen, who are to have five hundred guineas if they bring the lady back."

"And you shall have five hundred if they do not come up with us," was the reply.

The lad, highly elated by this promise, proceeded to tell them that he mounted his horse, whom he had kept ready saddled, the moment he had seen them safe off, and rode on to the turnpike as hard as he could, where he gave his father instructions to say that neither horse nor carriage had been through for an hour or more, and had scarcely instructed

structed him ere the two servants rode up full speed. He pretended to be waiting for change while they made their enquiries, and then told them he had seen a one horse chaise as he came out of Biggleswade, take the road for ———, which went at a devil of a rate, and as near as he could discern, there was a lady and gentleman in it, the former without a hat. They instantly offered him five guineas if he would become their conductor, as they were unacquainted with the cross roads, promising him a still farther gratuity if they came up with the chaise.

This was exactly what he wanted, therefore immediately rode back with them, and led them into some bye lanes about five miles distant, which he was perfectly acquainted with. He then sent them one way, while he went another, telling them the roads joined again about two miles farther; and, leaving them to follow their wild goose chase, he made the best of his way across the country, concluding by observing that his
old

old horse stood as much in need of refreshment as his companion.

Douglas laughed very heartily at this trick of his good friend's, as he called the postillion, who told him he had got the whole story from the servants who her Ladyship was, and who her guardian suspected was gone off with her; therefore he continued—"I thought I was serving a d——d deal better master than they were."

Having come to a small public-house, the lad, without disturbing any body, got a bit of hay and a pail of water, and after stopping about five minutes, said he was sure the horses would go quite fresh to Barnet.—Accordingly he took the lead, had a post-chaise and four ready by the time Douglas arrived, drove the wheel horses himself, with the permission of his brother whip, and between six and seven o'clock they arrived safe in Grosvenor Square. The two women servants, who were the sole inhabitants of the

the house, were not a little surprised to see their master and a beautiful young lady at such an early hour: they received orders to get breakfast ready immediately. The post-chaise was dismissed, but the friendly postilion retained, upon many accounts:—first to receive the recompence due to his faithful services; secondly, to precede them to church, to give notice if either of their enemies, the footmen he had misled, were upon the look-out, as there was no doubt but the General had discovered their intended marriage through the publication of the banns, and of course knew at what church they intended to have the ceremony performed.

While the maids were busy getting breakfast, Douglas hurried to Sir Charles Creighton's, to whom he imparted all his recent adventures in three words, and requested him to provide himself with money, and to call upon Mrs. Macallister, and bring her with him into Grosvenor Square.

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He hastened back to his Isabella, who had bore the fatigue of her precipitate journey much better than he dared to have hoped. As the clergyman and clerk had received their orders, he trusted they would be punctual to their appointment.

In a short time the Baronet and Mrs. Macallister arrived; and having sent the postillion to reconnoitre, Douglas, without allowing them time to pay their compliments to Lady Isabella, hurried them to church, her Ladyship being accommodated with a bonnet and cloak of her servant's. The clergyman was at his time as well as the clerk, and less than a quarter of an hour sufficed to put it out of the General's power to separate them. The handsome present the clergyman received from the transported bridegroom, led him to suppose that the new-married pair were persons of some consequence, and of large fortune: however, he kept his conjectures to himself, and after receiving his thanks and compliments, they

left the church, followed by the postillion, who had stood sentinel at the church door during the ceremony. They were crossing Bond Street in excellent spirits, and laughing over their past troubles, when who should they meet but the General's two footmen, seemingly in great haste. The postboy began to laugh before Douglas saw them, who, the moment he did, called to them, desiring them to follow him and Lady Isabella Douglas, as they meant to send a message to their master.

This speech, added to the apparent triumph of the postillion, left the two servants but little doubt that they were arrived too late to prevent the marriage ceremony; of course gave up all thoughts of receiving the promised reward, and, had they dared, they would have wreaked their vengeance upon the author of their misfortune. As it was, they followed the gay party in silence, and were not a little surprised when they

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found Mr. Douglas was at home in Grosvenor Square.

Having welcomed his lovely bride, and received the heartfelt congratulations of his best friend, and the more humble, though not less sincere, good wishes of Mrs. Macallister, Douglas wrote a short but respectful letter to the General, inclosed a copy of the agreement respecting settlements her Ladyship and he had entered into previous to their marriage, and used every argument likely to convince a man of sense, that love, not interest, had prompted him to make sure of the prize he had now the happiness to call his own.

Her Ladyship wrote a few lines to sue for a reconciliation, and in particular to entreat her dear Mrs. Macpherson would return to her, and continue as usual to favour her with her advice. These letters were given to the servants, with orders to hasten back, with all imaginable speed, to Biggleswade,

where the General and Governess were no doubt impatient waiting for some tidings of the runaway; and, by way of making them some amends for their recent disappointment, and the fatigue they had undergone, Douglas presented them with ten guineas each, to drink Lady Isabella's health.

This unexpected generosity quite reconciled the men to their want of success; and, by way of making some return, they repeated what they had told the postillion respecting the reward the General had held forth to tempt them to pursue the lovers; protesting they had rode near ten miles before they could fall into the great road, after the postillion had led them such a dance.

About ten o'clock they set out upon their return, with the unwelcome tidings, consoling themselves with the reflection that they had done their best to earn the promised sum.

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Douglas, knowing how uneasy his having spent the night from home must have made his uncle, requested the Baronet would send for his carriage to convey them to St. James's Square, where they would all take a second breakfast with the Duke. As he was averse to leaving Lady Isabella in a house with only females about her, lest the General should have followed the servants, and come upon her unawares, she readily consented to the proposal; therefore Mrs. Macallister went home; the postillion retired to sleep off his fatigue; and the happy couple, accompanied by the Baronet, drove to Durham House.

The Duke was but just come down stairs, and looked out of the parlour window the moment he heard a carriage stop;—the sight of his nephew quite revived him, as he began to fear some accident had befallen him; but he hardly knew what to think when he perceived him handing a lady out of the coach, as he had never seen Lady Isabella,

but easily guessed she was the daughter of the only woman he had ever loved, when Douglas presented her to him as his wife, and entreated his forgiveness for not having let him into their secret.

This was most readily granted, as well as his blessing. To see his nephew properly married had long been the first wish of his heart; and he was infinitely rejoiced to find him thus united to the first heiress in Scotland, as he knew, whatever might be the General's private wishes, he had it not in his power to deprive her Ladyship of a farthing of her fortune, notwithstanding her having married without his consent.

Having welcomed and wished them both joy in the most affectionate manner, his Grace requested to know how they had managed matters. Douglas satisfied his curiosity, to the old Peer's infinite amusement, who declared he would add another hundred to the postillion's promised reward, and

and proposed returning with them into Grosvenor Square, to see their new house, and to dispatch the lad, whom he thought ought to set out as speedily as possible, to settle their various expences, and what damage they might have done the horses.

As Douglas was of the same opinion, he made no objection to his proposal; therefore, after taking a survey of his nephew's new habitation, and admiring the taste Douglas had displayed in his choice of the furniture, the lad was sent for, and informed he was to have six hundred guineas, which he might take with him if he liked, or call upon them for whenever he chose. The money could be no where so safe as in his noble benefactor's hands, he thought, till he found a house to his mind; for he meant to set up master for himself.

The Duke and his nephew encouraged the idea, promising him their support and recommendation whenever he settled, which

the lad hoped would be at Bugden, where he knew there was a very good inn to be let.

With the utmost gratitude, and a very light heart, he took his leave, promising, according to Douglas's desire, to bring the horse he had left at Hatfield to town the next morning; and the Duke, with the bride and bridegroom, were talking of returning to Durham House, where the new-married pair had agreed to take up their residence till their own establishment was formed, when, to their infinite astonishment, and still greater pleasure, Mr. Elton was announced.

Douglas had expected him for some time, knowing he meant to spend the summer at an estate he had recently purchased near Bristol Hot Wells, for the benefit of his health, having been particularly recommended to try the salubrious air of that part of England, both as his summer and winter abode.

“ You

"You could not have arrived more *a-propos*," exclaimed Douglas, advancing to meet him, and greeting his arrival in Great-Britain with every demonstration of joy.

The good old man had reached London about half an hour before, and proceeded, with all possible expedition, into St. James's Square, to see the child of his affection, and had heard at Durham House of Douglas's recent marriage, and where he was likely to find him. Not having patience to wait the return of the bride and bridegroom, he hastened after them, and was not among the least rejoiced of Douglas's friends; while his unexpected appearance added infinitely to the rapture his grandson felt (for such he continued to style his former favourite Harcourt's son) during the mutual congratulations of this truly happy society.

General Clare and Mrs. Macpherson remained in the most intolerable state of uncertainty at Biggleswade, in which situation

they continued till near three o'clock in the afternoon, when the unsuccessful messengers returned, with the two letters entrusted to their care. The General, having vented his rage upon the innocent servants, deigned to peruse the notes, which convinced him all hopes of becoming related to his ward were at an end, and communicated his severe disappointment to Mrs. Macpherson, who secretly rejoiced that her pupil had so honourably freed herself from the persecutions she knew she would have undergone respecting Mr. Clare; therefore ventured to hint that Mr. Douglas had acted nobly respecting settlements, and she was certain, all things considered, that Mrs. Duncombe would rejoice that her grand-daughter had made so prudent a choice.

This was a truth of which the General was thoroughly sensible; he thought it would be much the wisest method to make a merit of necessity, and even affected to rejoice, like the Governess, that matters had ended so well; though

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though he agreed he had long hoped to call his beloved ward by a still more endearing appellation. Fortunately his son had never seen her, so would not be so much disappointed as himself; and very justly thinking that as he did mean to be reconciled to the happy couple, the sooner he acknowledged his intentions, the more conspicuous his disinterestedness would appear, he ordered the carriage to be got ready, and, to Mrs. Macpherson's great joy, set out for London, drove first into Grosvenor Square, from whence he proceeded to Durham House;—and, in the most courteous manner, professed his wishes for the bride and bridegroom's happiness, acknowledging he had intended to separate them, but did not much regret they had put it out of his power even to delay their happiness, which was all he ever wished; proceeding to compliment Mr. Douglas upon the generosity he had displayed respecting his wife's fortune, &c. &c.

Mrs. Macpherson, with far more sincerity, congratulated her beloved pupil, and readily promised, at her request, to continue to reside with her as usual ; and learned, with much satisfaction, that the bridegroom had dispatched an express to Kinross, to inform Mrs. Duncombe of these recent events.—The General, after being introduced to Mr. Elton and the Baronet, readily agreed to stay supper, and repeatedly declared that Lady Isabella's youth had alone induced him to wish to separate the lovers.

Douglas gave him all the credit he deserved, but requested to know how he became acquainted with their intended wedding ?

“ By means of this letter, Sir,” replied the General, taking one from his pocket, and presenting it to Douglas ; adding, “ If you are acquainted with the hand-writing, you will know to whom you are obliged ; it is anonymous, but perfectly calculated to
excite

excite my curiosity. Though I had not the least suspicion you were even an admirer of my ward's, I waited upon the clerk of the parish, where I was informed the banns had been published, and, from the description he gave me of your person, &c. found my anonymous correspondent had not wished to deceive me. The consequence of my enquiries was, my precipitate journey into Scotland; but I must acknowledge you completely out-generalled me; our mutual plots might truly be styled, *Ruse contre, Ruse ou guerre ouverte.*"

The moment Douglas cast his eyes over the epistle, he recognized the writing of Albertine; but was more puzzled to guess from whom, or from whence she had derived her intelligence, than astonished at this proof of her goodwill towards him. He communicated his discovery to the company, declaring he would take an early opportunity of returning his thanks to the officious young lady.

Sir

Sir Charles declared it was no more than he should have expected. Lady Isabella saw the action in much the most favourable point of view, and endeavoured to defend her former companion; though she agreed she had not taken the most honourable method to break a connexion which might militate with her own views. However, as none of the party wished to lower the young lady in her mother's, or the eyes of any of her other friends, they all agreed, at Lady Isabella's request, to consign her letter to oblivion;—and Douglas consoled himself with reflecting, that she would be sufficiently punished by the failure of her design.

CHAP. VII.

ON the preceding Sunday, Albertine chanced to entreat her mother, after mass, to accompany her to the church she had sometimes frequented during her residence at Mrs. Shenstone's, having still some notion of abjuring her errors, in hopes such a step might raise her in Douglas's esteem, whose continued indifference served only to increase her attachment.

Madame de L'Epinois made it a constant rule to comply with her wishes; of course accompanied her to church, having been previously assured by the Bishop that the
Protestant

their intention, and furious against her proud guardian, determined to frustrate their plan; therefore, the moment they returned home, she wrote the foregoing letter, which her maid entrusted to a porter, to deliver to General Clare, whom she conceived, as proved the case, she should put upon his guard.

On the Monday she called in Hertford Street, soon after Lady Isabella's departure, and exulted in the success of her plan.— Understanding from Mrs. Shenstone she had set off very unexpectedly, she longed to see Douglas, to discover, if possible, how he bore his disappointment; and had determined to frame some excuse to consult him during the week, just to enjoy his mortified looks, though she attributed the preference he gave Lady Isabella solely to her superior rank and fortune. Her supposed triumph was of short duration; for, during breakfast, on the Wednesday morning, the newspaper informed her, “ the Right Honourable George
Douglas

Douglas was married to the Right Honourable Lady Isabella Kinross, &c. &c. the preceding morning, at ——— Church."

The paper fell from her hands, and she hastily retired to conceal her rage and disappointment; while the Count, perceiving some paragraph she had been reading had thus affected her, soon discovered the source of her mortification; and tenderly attached to his former pupil, set out for Durham House the moment he had breakfasted, to be among the first to congratulate the happy pair.

Madame de L'Epinois made him the bearer of her compliments, and requested he would inform himself whether etiquette would permit her to renew them in person in the course of the day; as she and her daughter were under too many obligations to Mr. Douglas, not to make her wish to shew him every mark of respect in her power. The overnight's party, even including the
General,

General, were assembled in the breakfast-parlour at Durham House when the Count joined them, and was immediately introduced by the happy bridegroom to Lady Isabella, Mr. Elton, and the General; and having paid the usual compliments with more than common sincerity, readily promised to accompany them to Clapham, where, at Mr. Elton's request, the bride and bridegroom were going to spend a week or a fortnight previous to their presentation at St. James's, &c. He next mentioned Madame de L'Epinois's wish to pay her respects in person, and was assured she would ever be a welcome visiter; but as the invitation was not extended to Albertine, the Count, on his return to dress for his expedition, advised her to postpone paying her compliments to the new-married couple till they returned to town.

Little passed of any moment during the week, Douglas's precipitate marriage affording an inexhaustible theme of conversation
for

for the fashionable world; and through the means of John, it reached the Mackenzies, and gave her Ladyship fresh reason to lament her want of presence of mind at Everly Lodge, which precluded her from venturing to pay a congratulatory visit to the bride and bridegroom, who of course, at Clapham, received none but their most particular friends.

Colonel Frazer thought this a very propitious moment to urge his suit to Albertine, whom he had long known preferred her guardian to every other man, therefore hoped pique would stand his friend upon the occasion; and as her fortune was a very desirable object, and herself really a very fine young woman, he concluded they stood as good a chance of being happy as nine-tenths of the fashionable folks. With the permission of Douglas and her aunt, namely Madame de L'Epinois, he took an early opportunity of soliciting her hand, but met with a decided, though very cool negative. She
was

was much too young, she alledged; besides, she had no intention of altering her condition for the present.

In vain the Colonel urged his passion, and entreated she would allow him to hope her refusal did not originate in a preference for any other man.

That must be a matter of very little consequence to him, she observed, as she was determined not to bear the name of Frazer.

This was speaking too plain to allow the Colonel to press his suit any farther. He joined the Count in his apartment, and informed him of the result of his conference with the young lady. The Count vowed she was the most capricious being breathing, and was convinced her refusal merely originated in her knowledge that the Colonel's intentions met the approbation of her friends; he advised their communicating her final determination to her guardian, as it was a compliment

pliment the Colonel owed him after soliciting his consent.

Madame de L'Epinois could only lament her daughter's want of prudence, without daring even to venture remonstrating with her upon the subject. As soon as the two gentlemen arrived at Clapham, they entered upon the business that brought them. Douglas was really surprised, and, like the Colonel, began to suspect there was a rival in the case.

The Count protested he knew of none, though she was one of the most artful young jades that ever existed, and made up of caprice. Some days she was averse to walking, even into the next street; of late she had become very partial to exhibiting her graces in the mall; and he remembered Madame de L'Epinois having told him, that they had twice or thrice met a gentleman during their evening peregrinations, who had always addressed her daughter, and frequently

quently continued to converse with her for some time ; but as they both presumed it was some person she had seen either at Mrs. Shenstone's or at Lord Everly's, the circumstance had not even occurred to his recollection, till her unaccountable refusal of the Colonel induced him to try to fathom the motives of this extraordinary behaviour.

“ And did not Madame de L'Epinois enquire who this gentleman was ? ” asked Douglas.

“ Oh he behaved very politely, I understand, and lamented his not being able to converse with her in French ; and you know, my young friend, she is not a woman of the world, of course very much unacquainted with British etiquette : however, I will put her upon her guard.”

“ Why, if he is a man of honour, I can't guess what can prevent his publicly avowing his pretensions,” rejoined Douglas ; “ admitting he has any intention of becoming a candidate for the young lady's hand, the most favourable

favourable conjecture I can form is, that his friends are averse to his marrying a foreigner."

"That may be," said the Duke; "and if the young lady has really disposed of her heart in this stranger's favour, the Colonel must console himself with reflecting upon the dark side of her character. She is certainly a coquette, and he stands every chance of being happier with an English woman."

The Colonel readily acquiesced in his opinion; and after spending a very agreeable day at Clapham, returned to town, half cured of his prepossession in favour of Albertine.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

IN consequence of the suspicions he had formed, the Count determined to accompany Madame de L'Epinois and her daughter in their future rambles ; but was saved the trouble of displaying his zeal for the latter's welfare, by her setting off for Scotland, as it was presumed, with this unknown lover. Having retired over-night earlier than usual, under pretence of head-ach, she was missing next morning at breakfast ; and after the most diligent enquiries, they could only form vague suspicions that she and her maid had eloped soon after all the family had retired for the night, as they had neither of

them been in bed, and they had found the chain of the street-door down in the morning; and with this unsatisfactory account, leaving the Bishop to console the unfortunate mother, the Count arrived at Clapham, and rendered incoherent by his rage, with difficulty made the party he came to visit comprehend the purport of his errand.

Douglas protested he dared not venture to condemn what he had so lately practised;—only hoped Albertine's lover was actuated by the same motives which induced him to steal his Isabella from General Clare; if not, as she was wholly dependant upon him, he must, by way of ensuring her some support, act up to the spirit of the wills of the late Baron and Madame de Valcarné, which even went so far as to give him her fortune if she married contrary to his consent; a circumstance he rather thought the young lady was not aware of, as he had never mentioned it to her, not conceiving she would ever make a choice he should be under

under the disagreeable necessity of disapproving.

The Count swore she deserved to be punished for her folly. The Duke was convinced his nephew would see she was not imposed upon by some needy sharper, but still hoped her lover meant to give them an agreeable surprise.

After various conjectures, which all terminated in supposing she was gone away with the gentleman she used to meet in the park, the Count returned to town, promising to let Douglas (who was really anxious for the fate of his undeserving ward) know the moment any thing of consequence concerning her transpired; as the bride and bridegroom had determined to remain at Clapham till they set out for Scotland, where Mrs. Duncombe was impatiently waiting to give them her benediction, truly happy her grand-daughter had married into a family she so cordially esteemed.

The second day after Albertine's departure, the new-married couple were presented at St. James's; but wishing to avoid ceremonious visits, continued to reside with Mr. Elton. Indeed, but for the strange step Albertine had taken, they would have set out for Kinross immediately after their presentation; but Douglas was unwilling to leave London till he knew how, and to whom she had disposed of her hand; for that she was gone upon a matrimonial expedition admitted not a doubt. At last the mystery was elucidated by the arrival of a servant at Clapham, who brought a letter for Mr. Douglas, which ran as follows:—

“SIR,

“While Lady Fitzcarryl is writing to her aunt, I think it no less incumbent on my side to relieve the anxiety you have doubtless felt for the fate of your lovely ward;—though I am hardly able either to see or
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guide my pen, owing to an unfortunate accident which has just now befallen us, in our joint haste to return to London, but am particularly happy in being able to assure you my beloved Albertine has escaped unhurt; and hopes, as well as myself, you will feel inclined to overlook our little excursion, and place it to its true motive, mutual love.— With particular respects to Lady Isabella Douglas, I beg leave to subscribe myself, dear Sir,

“Your most obedient humble servant,

“FITZCARRYL.”

“So, so,” cried Mr. Elton, the moment Douglas ceased, who had read the letter aloud for the benefit of the company, “Mademoiselle is now my Lady. Pray who is this Nobleman? an Irishman, I presume;— I will venture to guess not among the richest Peers ever imported from that country.”

“I believe your last conjecture is perfectly true, Sir,” replied Douglas; “I have frequently

frequently seen his Lordship in public company, and must own report does not lead me to put much faith in his violent professions of love for my unfortunate ward, who, I am afraid, has fallen to the share of a very unprincipled man."

At that moment the Count de St. Mars was announced, who had hastened with the letter Madame de L'Epinois had just received from her dutiful daughter, eager to learn who Lord Fitzcarryl was. Albertine's letter to her mother was a mere repetition of what her Lord had wrote to Douglas, interlarded with a few dutiful expressions—the productions of her husband's brain, the Count apprehended, as the young lady neither esteemed nor loved that unfortunate woman; and finding Douglas entertained a very indifferent opinion of the Earl, thought it was a great pity he had not broke his neck; though he was still at a loss to guess what accident had happened—but supposed an overturn, or some such matter.

"The

"The messenger will most likely be able to satisfy our curiosity," said Douglas; by whose desire he was immediately summoned, and from him they learned, that coming down Grantham-Hill, upon their return from Gretna Green, as the Count had suspected, the happy couple had been overturned; and his Lordship, owing to his anxiety to save his beloved, had fallen through the front glass, and cut his face so much, that he was forced to remain at Grantham, and therefore sent the messenger forward to relieve the minds of Madame de L'Epinois, and of Mr. Douglas, by giving them a solution of the mystery that hung over Albertine's departure.

The moment the servant had been dismissed with a verbal message from Douglas, purporting he should be glad to see the Earl as soon as he returned to London, the Count requested to know who this Irishman was.

“ In the first place, he is a very fine figure,” rejoined Douglas; “ and can be very much the gentleman, but is wedded to the bottle, and has shook his elbows till he can hardly raise a suit of regimentals; for he is a Captain in the Guards, and his Officer’s pay is dipped into for its full value. Those of his estates he could dispose of, have long since come to the hammer—his town house, plate, &c. have followed the same road;—and he has very lately been obliged to sell his life interest in that part of his estates he could not alienate from his title. Such (and I speak from unquestionable authority) is the state of the finances of Albertine’s husband; and I am almost at a certainty she must have been obliged to find money for their expedition, except he had a very great run of luck the night before, for he is a professed gamester. Indeed, I am inclined to believe there are few vices which are not familiar to him. I must confess he came across me more than once, and I presume he broke the ice on the birth-night, when he danced with her

her

her at St. James's: she was adorned for conquest, though I think he became enamoured of her fortune; for I am of opinion all her sex are indifferent to him, which she will but too soon discover to her sorrow."

"Well, 'tis no matter," cried the Count; "she has often declared her husband should be a fine figure, and possess a title either when she gave him her hand or in expectancy, and she has kept her word. My Lord, no doubt, thinks he has played an excellent game, though he may perhaps find himself disappointed. Well, well, she will be called my Lady, and be kicked about the house before this day month, because her Lord won't be able to appropriate every farthing of her fortune to his own immediate use, which I hope in God, my young friend, you mean to prevent."

"Undoubtedly," replied Douglas. "I mean to act according to circumstances; but I can't suppose the Hibernian will make any objections to my proposals, particularly when he finds how far he is in my power."

As it grew late, the Count returned to town, promising, by Douglas's desire, to soften the picture he had drawn of Madame de L'Epinois's son-in-law to that good lady.

CHAP X.

THE greatest loss the Earl of Fitzcarryl ever experienced at the gaming-table, never gave him half so much concern as the untoward accident which detained him so much against his will at Grantham; particularly as he was forced to treat Albertine with the utmost tenderness, not thinking it prudent to throw off the mask till he was in possession of her fortune. Still he fell very short of the young

young lady's notions of a passionate lover ; and since his accident, which had very much disfigured his face, nay, even robbed him of all his former pretensions to a most handsome countenance, she could hardly forgive herself for permitting resentment to carry her the lengths she had gone. Of his circumstances she was totally ignorant, but soon guessed they were not in the most flourishing state, from his having recourse to her purse. His own enabled him to defray their expences to Scotland, and as far back as Grantham ; when the forced delay obliged him to apply to his better half for a supply, who began seriously to repent she had refused Colonel Frazer, and was more than ever enraged against Douglas for overlooking her charms, and with Lady Isabella for carrying off the prize. Indeed, she now began to suspect her Ladyship had every way proved her enemy, and only wished she could make her equally miserable, as she could not help thinking the future held forth no prospect of relief. She had disposed of her liberty, and

could expect no release from her present chains, except it pleased Heaven to take her Lord, whom, like the Count, she rather wished had broke his neck instead of his nose. However, as she found her time hang full as heavy upon her hands as it did upon the Earl's, she was not sorry when they set out for London, which they reached without any further accident, and drove to an hotel in Jermyn Street.

His Lordship immediately sent a servant into Grosvenor Square, to enquire whether Mr. Douglas was in town. As for Madame de L'Epinois, neither Albertine nor himself, though he now knew she was his wife's mother, cared three pins whether she was ever reconciled to them, and thought it more *her* duty to hold forth the olive branch than their's to sue for it; so they contented themselves with simply notifying their return, and place of abode, to the worthy woman, who, by the Count's and Bishop's advice, took no sort of notice of their cavalier message.

Finding Douglas was still in the country, the Earl determined to pay him an early visit next morning at Clapham. This the Count de St. Mars rather guessed, therefore presented himself at Mr. Elton's breakfast-table, in expectation of seeing the bridegroom, and witnessing the reception he would meet with. The Duke was returned to town, and Douglas only waited to settle his ward's affairs, before he proceeded to Scotland.—He laughed at the Count's impatience to behold the Hibernian hero, though he agreed his expectations were very well-founded; nor were they disappointed, as they had not left the breakfast-room before Douglas was informed that the Earl of Fitzcarryl was in the saloon.

“I am glad of it,” cried he, rising; “the sooner I get rid of my charge, the better I shall be pleased: I mean therefore to come to the point at once, and hope to settle every thing in a very few minutes. I won't ask him into this room, though we have no secret

secret matters to discuss; but I don't wish to put him out of countenance, and I must unavoidably refer to his past follies."

Lady Isabella looked as she felt, rather uneasy; which Douglas perceiving, assured her this would prove a very amicable interview, saying,

"You know, my love, I can't reproach his Lordship for having followed our example; and depend upon it he wishes to make me his friend, not his enemy. Besides, he is by no means deficient in sense, and will feel the necessity of acceding to my proposals the moment he finds how much his wife's imprudence has placed them both in my power."

He now joined the impatient Earl, whose patched face gave a truly ludicrous cast to his countenance. He hastened to address Douglas the moment he made his appearance, exclaiming—

"How

“How are you, my dear Sir? How is your lovely bride? for, like myself, you are still in the honey-moon; I dare say you would hardly have known me again?”

“I hardly think I should, my Lord; I am glad your accident turned out no worse.”

“You are very obliging, Sir. As I was the only sufferer, I thought myself, upon the whole, very fortunate; for damme, if I would not rather have been cut to minced meat than any harm should have befallen my dear little girl, who hopes, like myself, we have not forfeited your friendship through our late excursion.”

“Having so lately taken an almost similar step, my Lord, I ought to be the last to censure what you have done; I only hope you have, or mean to make a handsome settlement upon the Countess of Fitzcarry, adequate to her rank?”

“Why, as to that, Mr. Douglas, we took one another's word; therefore it rests with us to do what we like with what belongs to ourselves.”

“I mean

“ I mean to do my duty by my ward, my Lord; it is therefore incumbent upon me, as her guardian, to see that her own fortune is settled upon her and her children, as firmly as it now can be.”

“ Oh! we don’t wish to give you any farther trouble, Sir; the lady has now made me her guardian, and, faith! I will be as honest a one as you, no doubt, have hitherto been.”

“ Of that *I* make no doubt, my Lord;—but I must entreat you would inform me what settlement you now propose making upon your wife, and what provision you mean to make for younger children before I give up my trust?”

“ My eldest son must have the family estate, and I will saddle it with a jointure for my wife. As for the rest of my children, if I have any more, why they shall have what I can give them at my death. I should be very sorry to have any dispute with you, Mr. Douglas, about my right; you must know I alone now have power over the Countess of Fitzcarry’s

Fitzcarryl's fortune ; and I will make a liberal provision for my wife and children. I have the honour of my family at heart, and I must insist upon doing it my own way."

" I am very sorry, my Lord, you force me to speak plainer than I intended. Your whole aim is to get possession of my ward's fortune, and I really must see it properly secured before I deliver it up: were it once in your hands, that would be totally at your option."

" By Jafus, Sir, I don't understand such treatment ! You have no longer any power over my wife's fortune ; and if you don't chuse to deliver it up amicably, the law shall force you to do me justice."

" Only take care you have justice on your side, my Lord ; it is in my power to prevent your ever touching a shilling of your wife's fortune ! You are not yet aware of the predicament you stand in. Had my consent been asked, I should not have prevented my ward from marrying the man of her choice. I should then only have seen the same justice
done

done to her before marriage, I now expect you to do after. I will take care she is not totally ruined ; a settlement she shall have before I part with a shilling."

"Now, faith, Sir, you compel me to be as plain as yourself; neither you, nor any man in Great Britain, shall force me to make a settlement, if I don't chuse to do it—so do your worst: I know what I am about; I have my wife's free consent to receive her fortune without any conditions. She is not beholden to you for what I demand; so let me advise you to give up the trifle that comes to her share, of an immense fortune, which would all have been her's, had not you interposed, Sir. It was a very strange affair; you was once upon the point of marriage with the late Madame de Valcarné, I understand:—pray what settlements did you propose to make upon her at that time? I don't suppose the Marquis de Fierval's *Commis* would have made any very adequate to her fortune. Your history is not generally known, I believe, Sir; take care I don't inform

inform the world how honourably you came by your riches. I hardly know whether Madame de Valcerné had the power of disposing of her property as she did, to the son of nobody knows who—though he bears the name of Douglas. By Jafus! you have forced me to say to your face what I have hitherto forborne mentioning behind your back; nor shall I ever make any thing public you may wish to have kept private, if you do but put me in possession of the trifle you acknowledge belongs to me.”

Douglas surveyed the Earl for some moments with the most expressive contempt,—then said—“I am glad, my Lord, you have been so candid with me; but you will neither put me in a passion, nor gain any thing by your threats. Make all your wife may have told you as public as you please; my character will not suffer by any thing you can assert: I should rather suppose that even your wife is hardly sensible how much she is in my power. I think, if she were, she would
have

have acted very differently : I am sure your Lordship would. My ward, I must inform you (as perhaps you are not so well versed in *her* family history as you seem to be in mine) is the daughter of the Chevalier de L'Epinois, afterwards Baron de Valcerné, by a private marriage, which, according to the then laws of France, was deemed invalid. The Chevalier therefore married Madame de Valcerné, and his former wife took the veil ;—but this child was brought up as Mademoiselle de Valcerné, and till that lady's death, I, in common with all her friends, supposed the young lady to be her daughter."

" I know all this, Sir, and that the lady who passes for her aunt is Lady Fitzcarryl's mother.—But to the point :—The Baron de Valcerné left her all his fortune, and her supposed mother more than doubled it ; you were left her guardian, but her fortune is absolutely independent."

" Not absolutely, my Lord ; the Baron de Valcerné left his late wife sole guardian to
his

his daughter, and desired, in his will, which I have by me, that the young lady should be put in possession of her fortune on her wedding-day."

"Well, and what else do I require, Mr. Douglas?" hastily asked his Lordship.

"But there was a trifling restriction annexed to this clause, my Lord, which ran thus:—

"Provided such marriage was contracted with the entire consent and approbation of Madame de Valcarné, else the fortune was to revert to that lady, except Mademoiselle Albertine attained the age of twenty-five, unmarried, such being the period specified by the laws of France for coming of age;—in that case, on that day the money was to be paid into her own hands; and if Madame de Valcarné died before the young lady married, or became of age, she was, according to the Baron's will, to appoint a proper guardian for his daughter, and entrust her or him with the same power over her fortune.

"In

In consequence, upon her death-bed, that lady, having made a considerable addition to her adopted daughter's fortune, appointed me her sole guardian, and left her under the same restrictions the Baron had done; that is, if she married without my consent, the whole fortune reverted to me, if I chose to take advantage of her imprudence. I presume, therefore, I need not add that she has forfeited all right to demand it at my hands; she was worth about eight thousand a-year, but your Lordship now perceives you are both at the mercy of the Marquis de Fierval's *Commis*, whom you, no doubt, despise: but that won't prevent his seeing ample justice done the Baron de Valcerné's daughter."

So severe and unexpected a disappointment was more than the Earl could bear with any degree of patience, and he exclaimed, in a furious tone—"Your pretended power won't go down in this country, Mr. Douglas; and by Heavens, if you don't deliver up
what

what my wife has a just claim to immediately, why you have not done with me, that is all!"

"What, your Lordship thinks to frighten me out of the money, I perceive? Believe me I am not so easily intimidated; as I have already told you, by those wills, which Lady Fitzcarryl was to have inherited under, she has forfeited every claim; and I will therefore make use of the power she has so unintentionally given me, to do her the only service which can be of any avail—namely, to see the money properly secured to her and her children, should she have any."

"Oh, very well, Sir; you have pretty plainly shewn me what we both have to expect, and want to make a merit of withholding what don't belong to you; but you shall soon find I can assert my rights, and maintain them too in spite of your boasted power."

"You are at liberty to take what steps you chuse, my Lord; and though your behaviour, and impertinent insinuations, hardly entitle

entitle you to the forbearance I have hitherto shewn, in consideration of my ward, I will inform you how I will settle this matter with you, amicably I mean, if your Lordship will inform me what will clear your family estate from its present incumbrances. You find your affairs are no secret to me. I will instantly put you in possession of your wife's fortune, upon your securing her a jointure of three thousand a-year upon that estate, allowing her five hundred a-year for pin money out of those rents, and settling twenty thousand pounds upon younger children.—Your affairs must be in a bad state indeed, if her fortune won't allow of this disposition.—Should these proposals not suit you, I shall place the whole sum in trust for her during your life, allow her the interest merely, and at her death the money shall revert to her children, if she leaves any, or be disposed of according to her last will. I shall go into Scotland in a day or two, but I shall leave my orders with Counsellor ———.”

“ I am

" I am perfectly decided, Mr. Douglas ; I chuse to have my just right without any conditions, and I will make you deliver it up, so that's my last word," and out of the room his Lordship bounced, with hasty strides.

Half frantic to find he had been thus egregiously mistaken in his sanguine hopes, he drove back to town, cursing his own stupidity for not having made more minute enquiries into his wife's fortune before he carried her to Scotland, and determined, at all events, to endeavour to threaten Douglas into better terms.

CHAP. X.

THE Count de St. Mars had placed himself at a window to see him make his exit, and protested he might justly be styled the Knight of the Woeful Countenance.—Douglas, who had joined the party, told him he ought to make allowances for his recent disappointment, which he seemed so ill prepared to meet; and then, at Lady Isabella's request, recapitulated what had passed between them.

“ Insolent scoundrel!” cried Elton.—
“ You have had more patience, my dear George, than I should have had; but let him

him try what he can do; I hope we shall soon hear he is in a prison, and that his ungrateful wife is waiting upon him;—I would act up to the very rigour of the law.”

“He can’t well be much more punished than he is,” replied Douglas.—“I should suppose, when he cools, and allows himself to reflect, he will accept my offers; if not, he must go to law. I have half a mind to throw the fortune into Chancery; for I will be bound for it that Court would not be more bountiful than I meant to have been.”

“I would not give up my own power,” said the Count; “I would keep them dependant upon me, were I in your place, and allow them what I chose till the came of age (in conformity with the will), and then treat them according to their deserts. If they are not more thankful than at present, I would, sooner than they should touch it, bestow the money upon some public charity.”

“No, my dear Count, the money was intended for Lady Fitzcarryl, and, at all events, I will allow them the interest; they

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have

have a right to make what use they please of that ; the principal I will have secured, or it would not last long."

"That I am sure it would not," rejoined the Count ; "but the wicked jade has taken the rascal in at last : by your account, he thought he had only to come, ask, and have."

"I don't suppose," said Elton, "she even reflected how she came by the money, or what right she had to dispose of it ; 'tis evident she gave her Lord to understand she should have possessed all the late Madame de Valcarné's fortune but for her partiality to you. I really believe, George, she is capable of saying or doing any thing now. I never liked her."

"Nor I," cried the Count ; "but thank God she has taken an excellent method to atone for her sins ; she will suffer for her Lord's disappointment."

Lady Isabella hoped they would consult their own interest, and her peace of mind,
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in accepting the offers; acknowledging, she dreaded any further discussion between her husband and the Earl.

Douglas assured her all would terminate amicably: quarrelling with him would answer no one good purpose to his Lordship; and Albertine would doubtless persuade him, for her own sake, to accept his terms.

The Count argued to the same purpose, and then went to inform Madame de L'Epinois of the result of her son-in-law's visit; and Lady Isabella's fears vanished before her husband's representations and Mrs. Macpherson's judicious observations, who hinted, as no one could doubt but Mademoiselle de Valcerné had married for love, her Ladyship must suppose she would be as anxious as herself to prevent their husbands from coming to a serious quarrel. The day therefore passed off very agreeably, and their morning visiter was even forgot, when Douglas was called out of the room just at

dusk, to a gentleman who wished to see him. Without asking any questions, he immediately obeyed the summons; while Lady Isabella, excessively alarmed, though she hardly knew at what, asked Mr. Elton if he did not think this a very unseasonable visiter, and wondered who it could be. That worthy man, who sincerely participated in her fears, though he did not chuse to acknowledge as much, even made light of her visible apprehension; alledging that a man of Douglas's extensive acquaintance was very liable to such interruptions, admitting no such man as the Earl of Fitzcarryl existed. Besides, that Nobleman, if he entertained any sinister designs, would most probably have wrote;—therefore he had great reason to suppose that Douglas's present visiter was totally unacquainted with the noble Peer.

In less than half an hour, which had seemed an age to Lady Isabella, Douglas returned, and in answer to her questions respecting his visiter, said he was a gentleman who came
upon

upon business, which perfectly excused the lateness of the hour and the summons he had received ; hinting, that a particular friend of his had got into trouble, and wished him to step forward to his assistance as early as he could make it convenient the next morning, which he had promised to do.

This story passed current, and Douglas was applauded by his lovely wife and the good Elton for his generous disposition ; but the fact was, the person to whom he was called out was an Officer in the Guards, who waited upon him in Lord Fitzcarryl's name, to inform him the Peer expected he would either deliver up his wife's fortune by twelve o'clock the next day, or meet him at six with his pistols in Hyde-Park.

Douglas instantly promised to comply with his latter request, and thus dismissed his not absolutely unexpected visiter. Having so short a notice, and being at such a distance from town, Douglas was obliged to take a

little time for reflection ; and it may be supposed he was particularly anxious to keep the intended meeting a secret. He therefore wrote a few lines to Sir Charles Creighton, briefly stating what had occurred, and requesting he would be his second, and provide him with proper offensive weapons for the occasion, as sending for his own pistols from Durham House would doubtless excite suspicions in the Duke.

This note he dispatched privately by his own man, and then returned into the saloon ; when, having really no idea her husband had deceived her, Lady Isabella recovered her usual spirits ; and whenever Douglas was thoughtful, it was attributed to anxiety for his friend, whom he half hinted was Sir Charles Creighton. He did not mention what time he meant to go to town till he retired, when her Ladyship put the question to him :—his heart almost failed him while he gazed upon the interesting enquirer ; but
innate

innate courage, and the certainty that he was exposing his life in a just cause, kept up his spirits, and he replied he had some notion of setting off betimes, and returning to breakfast, as he hoped he should soon be able to settle the business, and it would convince his friend of his anxiety to oblige him.

Her Ladyship perfectly agreed with him, though she thought eleven o'clock would be as soon as he could do business in London. However, she gave up to his superior judgment, and went to sleep, supposing Douglas would rise at seven; but by half past five, taking every precaution not to disturb her, Douglas alighted in Piccadilly. Sir Charles was up, waiting his arrival; but protested, the moment they were alone, that he had never imposed so disagreeable a task upon him, and pressed him very seriously to know if the matter did not admit of an amicable termination.

Douglas briefly recapitulated what had passed between him and the Earl, concluding that any concession on his part, were he so inclined (which was very far from being the case, as he thought he had justice on his side), must be attributed to that basest of all passions, the influence of which he had never yet felt, fear."

"I can't absolutely agree to that," rejoined Sir Charles; "the fellow is a professed duellist and notorious bully, and has long disgraced the title he bears."

"Then I shall be doing mankind in general an essential service in endeavouring *honourably* to rid the world of a villain."

"Why, if you are obliged to draw a trigger against the scoundrel, pray God send the ball may pass through his heart as a warning to all his fellow-creatures!"

"Well, the time draws near, so let us proceed; we can talk as we walk along."

Sir Charles had taken every necessary precaution, which his friend had omitted, though he thought it full as likely he might

might fall as the Earl. They debated the matter till they entered the Park, and found they had preceded his Lordship; but in a few minutes discerned his patched face advancing towards them. Sir Charles walked a few steps to meet his Lordship's second, who left him for the same purpose, and asked if the Earl meant to retract his unreasonable demand; but was informed his Lordship persisted in having immediate possession of what he deemed his right, therefore Mr. Douglas must take the consequence of refusing to comply.

This being reported to Douglas, who was not less resolute, he told the Baronet the only thing that remained to be done was to settle the distance and mode of firing, as he should certainly act up to the spirit of the Baron and Madame de Valcérné's wills; nor would he part with one shilling, except the Earl chose to settle the whole unconditionally upon his wife and her heirs, independent of himself.

Lord Fitzcarryl, to his infinite sorrow, found he had now put it out of his power even to close with Douglas's former offers, and that his threats had by no means intimidated his adversary. What money and jewels his wife had carried off with her he knew would soon be expended; and going to law with her young guardian, was not only very tedious, but also very hazardous;—and the firmness Douglas evinced, almost convinced him he possessed the power that he seemed inclined to assume.

During these gloomy reflections, he took a few hasty strides upon the grass, and began to think immediate death was almost preferable to the dreary prospect he had before him. His adversary was so formidable, that it might be years before he obtained possession of the disputed fortune, and yet he could not retract from his repeated demands with any degree of honour; he therefore proposed they might stand foot to foot, and
called

called to Douglas to signify his objections, who replied, "Just as his Lordship pleased;" but the seconds settled the distance at eight paces, and agreed that both gentlemen should fire together when they gave the signal: they did, and both fell at the same moment.

Sir Charles's eyes were upon his Lordship when he measured his length upon the ground, and he was in hopes his prayer had been heard; but all his joy forsook him when he perceived his friend also extended, to whom he ran, terrified beyond expression.

"Don't be alarmed, Charles," cried Douglas, making an effort to rise, assisted by the Baronet, who beckoned to a surgeon he had engaged privately to be in waiting, and who immediately approached, followed by his carriage, which he perceived would be wanted. He instantly examined where the ball had entered, and seemed alarmed when he saw it was on the left breast.

"Nothing

Nothing could be done he said where he was.

“ Then see if you can afford any assistance to my adversary,” rejoined Douglas.

His Lordship was leaning upon his second's shoulder, but swore, when the surgeon approached him, he stood in no need of his skill, and enquired whether his patient was satisfied.

The surgeon, perceiving the blood gushing very freely from a wound the Earl had received in the thick part of his thigh, told him he hardly knew which was in the most danger, and advised his second to make what haste he could home, as both gentlemen were incapacitated from renewing the combat.

Lord Fitzcarryl had made himself so sure of victory, that he had taken no kind of precaution ; but finding he was unable to walk, even with the assistance afforded him by his second,

second, and several other people having now assembled near the spot—a hackney-coach was therefore sent for, while Douglas was helped into the surgeon's carriage, and, supported by the two gentlemen, was gently driven into Grosvenor Square, whither he chose to be carried ; and the surgeon, having once more examined the wound, refused to extract the ball alone, desiring two of his friends might be sent for to assist at the operation.

Douglas, perceiving the danger more serious than he had at first apprehended, asked if a short delay would be attended with any bad consequences.

“ None at all,” the surgeon replied ; “ only the sooner you are out of pain, the better.”

Sir Charles, who had the sincerest, nay, an almost fraternal regard for his friend, was half frantic, and called down vengeance upon the
the

the head of the ungrateful Albertine, and her needy husband.

“The former may be more to be pitied than blamed, Charles,” said Douglas; “and the latter has been as great a sufferer as myself. I forgive them both sincerely, let what will be the consequence of my wound; but must request you would send for Oswald, the Solicitor, as I should wish, since time is allowed me, to settle my worldly affairs, and I have no will by me.”

The Baronet complied with his desire, and, in addition, proposed sending for the Count de St. Mars, as the most proper person to break the dreadful tidings to the Duke of Durham, who alone must undertake the still more difficult task of conveying them to Clapham.

Douglas sighed deeply; and while the cold sweat rolled in large drops down his pallid cheeks, exclaimed—“Oh Charles!
what

what is death compared to what I now feel upon my beloved Isabella's account ! For Heaven's sake, don't let her know any thing of this unhappy affair till I am either out of danger, or no more ! If it please God to call me, I hope I die in a just cause ; at least my own heart flatters me so."

The surgeon hurried home for cordials, and other necessary preparations for the ensuing operation, while the servants, having received their orders not to mention the recent affair, were dispatched various ways, according to the practitioner's orders.

Sir Charles ran himself into St. Albans Street, and found the Count, who was a very early riser, just come down. The Baronet's looks almost declared his errand ; but when the Count learned the cause of his early visit, he was nearly distracted ; and, like Sir Charles, was at a loss for terms to express his detestation of Albertine and the sanguinary Fitzcarryl. He returned with the

the Baronet into Grosvenor Square, deploring the fate of their beloved friend, and grieving for the lovely interesting Lady Isabella.

Mr. Oswald had just preceded them, and was receiving his client's orders ; they therefore stopped in another room with the first surgeon, who was returned, and who declared he could not pretend to answer for Douglas's life till the ball was extracted, and much doubted, should he survive the operation, whether he should then be able to pronounce him out of danger ; therefore represented to them the necessity of not allowing his patient to exhaust his strength and agitate his mind, by talking too much. Hardly relying upon the caution he had given them, he chose to be present during their interview, while Oswald was hastily putting in proper form the orders he had received.

The Count, having expressed the sorrow depicted too strongly upon his countenance

to

to allow any one to doubt the sincerity of his words, chid his young friend for having hazarded his life in the manner he had done, for the advantage of a worthless, artful young jade, much beneath his, or any good man's care or notice, though he agreed he did not doubt he should have acted in the same manner in his place; concluding, should the Earl survive the wound he had received, he would find he had not finished his work;—for as his wife's countryman, he thought himself fully authorized to call him to as severe an account as Douglas had done.

Douglas was sensible both of his motive and of his meaning; but not being allowed to expatiate upon what had passed between him and the Earl, he merely requested he would step into St. James's Square, and, with the necessary precaution, communicate his situation to the Duke, whom he wished to see; for upon him alone he depended to console his wife, should what his kind friends dreaded more than himself be his fate, and he was determined

determined she should be kept in ignorance till the event was in some measure decided.

The Count immediately departed, and in the most prudent manner prepared his Grace for the sad tidings he came to impart, endeavouring to inspire him with hopes he was far from feeling, and recommending him to exert his utmost fortitude for the ensuing interview.

The Duke was truly miserable, both upon his nephew's and Lady Isabella's account;—however, as unavailing lamentations could not recal the past, he hastened to see his beloved George, perhaps for the last time: and the reflection nearly deprived him of sufficient presence of mind to attend to what might be deemed his sacred requests.

The two other surgeons were waiting when the Duke arrived; and having seen their patient, expressed their hopes he would yet do well, though the present appearance
of

of the wound was certainly dangerous.— However, having settled all his worldly affairs, the surgeons requested to be left alone with their patient, as the presence of his friends increased his agitation, and of course his danger; and they should be better able to consult what would be most proper to do. Perhaps they might find it expedient to defer extracting the ball for some time, at least they would take every feasible method to diminish the hazard of the operation. With tears, which they all three in vain endeavoured to restrain, the gentlemen took their leave of Douglas, who protested they were more afraid than he was, as he meant to convince the surgeons that he felt no more dread of their instruments than he had done of the pistol so lately levelled at his breast. For his wife's and friends' sake, he wished to live: still, should he be called away, he had the satisfaction to reflect that he should die at enmity with no man; for as he hoped for mercy himself, he, in this solemn moment, forgave all his enemies, not excepting the
Earl

Earl of Fitzcarryl; and he had also the consolation to reflect, that among the number of follies he had been guilty of, no capital unexpiated offence lay heavy on his heart; his wife—— His voice failed for a few seconds, but soon recovering his fortitude, he continued, “his wife would be amply provided for, as she would inherit the bulk of his fortune; and he hoped the lenient hand of Time, and the consolations of her’s and his friends, would reconcile her to what he knew she would deem a very severe loss.”

Unable longer even to restrain their grief, the Duke, Count, and Baronet left the room, and spent the ensuing quarter of an hour in what might justly be termed the highest degree of mental torture. In proportion as their fears increased, the object became dearer, and each execrated the author of their misfortunes. The Duke was certain he practised daily at a mark, and had, no doubt, often threatened many people out of money, who dreaded exposing themselves

to the unequal chance they stood with such a scoundrel.

“He certainly aimed at the heart,” the Count observed; and from the nature of the wound, and the slow procedure of the surgeons, he was convinced had narrowly missed it.

Sir Charles alledged there could have been no dishonour in refusing a challenge from such a known villain! Still, who could blame Douglas? though all his friends might have reason to repent what might be termed an excess of courage, to the latest period of their lives.

They were debating the point, when they heard a footstep hastily advancing; each approached the door, and found it was one of the Duke's footmen, who had been present during the operation, and had been dispatched by the surgeons to inform his Grace the ball was extracted, and their patient in
less

less danger than they had dared to have expected. His Grace was with difficulty prevented from fainting; and as soon as he was a little revived, and had ardently returned his thanks where they were most justly due, one of the surgeons entered, and confirmed the pleasing intelligence, assuring them there were great hopes that Mr. Douglas would recover, though he acknowledged it was one of the most hair-breadth escapes ever man experienced, and promised they should see the patient as soon as he was in bed.

Their first fears thus happily, and almost, as they thought, miraculously relieved, a thousand future doubts arose to damp their present joy. To lose him now would be almost worse than had he died under the operation.

Sir Charles was far more sanguine in his expectations than the two elderly gentlemen, and endeavoured to bring them into his way of thinking. Having put their patient to bed,

bed, the three practitioners joined in wishing them joy of the recent escape Mr. Douglas had had; at the same time confessing he was still in very great danger, though they thought it much more than probable he might recover; assuring his Grace he might depend upon their utmost care.

The gentlemen, with heavy hearts, enquired whether they might not see him, provided they promised to make a very short visit, as their patient seemed to wish it himself: the head surgeon therefore accompanied them into his room. Douglas was in much better spirits than they could have supposed; though his fine healthy countenance, which, only a few hours before, seemed to bid defiance to every trial, was now totally faded; and he hardly looked like the same man. He took a hand of each, then requested the Duke and Count would set out immediately for Clapham.

“The surgeons think it won't be prudent to let my wife see me,” said Douglas;—
“though I am sure her presence would facilitate my cure. However, keep her in the country if you possibly can; she can't long remain in ignorance of what has befallen me; but I trust you will make as light as possible of every thing, and assure her I shall be able to travel in a few days.”

He would have said a great deal more, if the surgeon's looks had not informed his auditors it was time to withdraw, which they did, after promising to represent every thing to her Ladyship in the manner least likely to alarm her spirits, and to let him know how they had succeeded the moment they returned.

The Duke and Count set off immediately for Mr. Elton's, leaving Sir Charles in Grosvenor Square, which he declared he would not quit till his friend was pronounced out of danger, and should take upon himself to give every necessary order during his confinement.

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CHAP. XI.

LADY ISABELLA did not discover Douglas had deceived her respecting the time of his departure, till chancing to wake, she heard a clock over Mr. Elton's stables strike six. At first she supposed he must have made a mistake, as even the present hour was much too early for business, and he seemed to have been gone some time. She then conceived she must have miscounted the clock, but her watch agreed with her ears. Unable to sleep any more, she soon rose, and rambled about in the extensive gardens belonging to the villa, till Elton and Mrs. Macpherson joined her, hoping every

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moment

moment to see her husband return, as he had given her some hopes he should be back before breakfast. She mentioned his having gone so much earlier than she expected, to her two friends, who, like herself, began to dread Douglas had also deceived them respecting his over-night's visiter. Lord Fitzcarryl's menaces were uppermost in their thoughts; and to some engagement with him they began to attribute his journey to town, but did not chuse to hint their suspicions to her Ladyship: on the contrary, they endeavoured to rally her upon what they termed her groundless fears.

After breakfast, Elton made private enquiries respecting Douglas's departure, and found he had set off before five on horseback, unattended even by a groom, contrary to his usual custom.

This intelligence did not remove the serious apprehensions he now entertained, and he had determined to dispatch a servant

to

to town just as the Duke and Count arrived. Lady Isabella, who had seen the carriage advancing, met them in the hall; but their dejected looks alarmed her so much, that she could not summon courage to enquire for her husband till they reached the saloon.

Elton, who, like herself, guessed something extraordinary had befallen his young favourite, was equally incapacitated from asking what had detained him. In vain the Duke and Count endeavoured to pay their compliments with more than usual unconcern; their efforts made their constraint but more perceptible, as the sight of Lady Isabella almost unmanned them; and when, unable any longer to conceal her agitation, she went up to the Duke, and putting her hand on his, said, in a tremulous accent, "Is no one else coming, Sir?" his Grace would have replied, but his voice faltered, while he gazed upon her lovely intelligent face, and the tears glittered in his eyes while

he attempted to say, " Who did my dear girl expect ?"

" Oh Heavens !" she exclaimed, clasping her arms round his neck, " what has happened to my Douglas ? For pity's sake relieve my mind at once, or tell me he is no more ! I am prepared, indeed I am, even for that horrid confirmation of all my fears !"

A violent flood of tears relieved her bursting heart, while the Duke, folding her in his arms, assured her, in the most soothing accents, that her fears were absolutely groundless, saying—" A trifling accident has certainly prevented Douglas from returning to Clapham, as he intended ; but that ought not thus dreadfully to agitate you."—Raising her head, and fixing her tearful, yet expressive eyes upon the Duke, she said, " No trifling matter would have detained him, Sir, or have affected you as you evidently are. I can easily guess why he deceived me ; but what good can it answer for you to attempt to impose on me ? for till I have seen him, I
shan't

shan't have a moment's rest; so pray be candid, and tell me at once the worst I have to dread; my own fears have already exceeded the most horrid tidings you can have to impart; a quarrel has ensued between him and Lord Fitzcarryl; you find I guess the worst; pray tell me at once what I have to dread!"

To resist such earnest entreaties was impossible; the Duke therefore, with the greatest precaution, related nearly what had happened.

Elton had learned the particulars rather more in detail from the Count while the Duke was satisfying Lady Isabella; therefore he could but ill assume the character of a comforter, while he really stood in need of consolation himself. At Mrs. Macpherson's request, her Ladyship withdrew with her for a short time, but soon returned into the saloon, and declared her intention of going to town with his Grace.

As this was no more than the Duke expected, he did not chuse to put an absolute negative upon her proposal, but seemed to acquiesce in her determination; though he said he was afraid her presence would rather retard than advance his cure, mentioning the surgeons' prohibition, who must be the best judges in such a case. His arguments, though she acknowledged the justice of them, by no means induced her to recede from her resolution. She knew Douglas would like to have her near him; was convinced he would take any thing from her sooner than from any body else; and assured his Grace she would conceal her fears—nay, if he thought it best, would affect to be in ignorance of his real situation: his Grace might tell him she had merely been informed he had been thrown from his horse, which story she implicitly believed, and was satisfied there was no danger. This must tranquillize his mind, and she would take care to confirm every thing he chose to say.

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In short, she became so pressing, that his Grace promised to take her to Durham House, where she must remain till he had consulted the surgeons who attended her husband, and she must promise to abide by their decision, as she certainly would not be so unreasonable as to wish to endanger her husband's life, merely to gratify her wish to see him.

"Heaven forbid!" she hastily exclaimed, and assured him she would readily subscribe to his conditions, provided she was permitted to see the surgeon: and then asked where Douglas was wounded.

"In the left shoulder," the Duke told her, as the least likely part to increase her alarm; and having prevailed upon her to dine in the country, they all returned to town in the evening, as Elton was scarcely less anxious to see his *grandson* than her Ladyship was to see her husband, who, having coincided with the Duke's wishes, could

not object to being set down with Mrs. Macpherson at Durham House, while the rest of the party proceeded to Grosvenor Square, promising to return as speedily as possible to relieve her anxiety.

His Grace had given orders, before he left town, that one or other of the surgeons should always remain, if not with Douglas, in the house; and in consequence found the chief operator with Sir Charles, who, in answer to both his Grace's and Elton's hasty enquiries, assured them his patient was in as fair a way of recovery as he could possibly expect, considering what he had undergone:—he had slept very comfortably for two hours or more, and appeared very much refreshed when he awoke; adding, he had never before had so calm, so courageous, and so composed a patient under his hands. Mr. Douglas seemed to dread the operation much less than he had done, and had addressed them when

when all was ready, with a degree of firmness that astonished them all. From the precautions they had taken, he presumed himself to be in some danger, he told them, from the attempt they were going to make to extract the ball; therefore entreated they would merely consider him in the light of one of those unhappy objects so frequently under their hands: he was not afraid of dying, yet had no present wish to leave this world for a better, though he hoped he was tolerably prepared, should his *fiat* be gone forth; assuring them, he would not shrink from the instruments, and recommending their each drinking a bumper of brandy to their success, if they thought their hands were not sufficiently steady. In short, he spoke with such confidence, as inspired them with courage, and certainly kept his word in every respect; for he never even sighed till all was over, and it was upon his courage, patience, and excellent constitution that they built their greatest hopes.

Thus much the surgeon thought it necessary to say, when he found the Duke seemed far more resigned than he appeared in the morning; for he acknowledged to Sir Charles they had then very great doubts whether Douglas would recover.

His Grace dared not expatiate upon his rising fears, only said, "Well, God in Heaven bless and preserve the noble fellow for all our sakes!"

"Amen, amen," cried the worthy Elton, wiping his eyes; "while there is life, there are hopes;—but Lady Isabella will think us long; I can judge of her anxiety by my own. Sweet, tender mourner, for your sake particularly I hope your husband will be spared!"

The Duke proceeded to inform the surgeon what had passed between him and her Ladyship, requesting he would accompany him to Durham House, and devise some means

to quiet her, fears if he thought it would be imprudent she should see Douglas.

If she could keep to the resolution she had formed," the surgeon observed, " he foresaw no danger in her being near him, and it might afford infinite satisfaction to his patient, so long as he supposed her ignorant of his danger, the extent of which it would be highly improper either should be acquainted with :—he had enquired, during the afternoon, if his Isabella were come to town. But he should particularly advise their not seeing each other till after the wound had been examined the next morning ; and as he rather hoped his patient had fallen into another doze, proposed accompanying his Grace home immediately, as the sooner her Ladyship heard his opinion, the more likely she was to acquiesce in the proposed delay ; particularly as he could solemnly assure her no fresh danger had arisen since the morning."

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The Duke made no objection, as he thought it was downright barbarity to keep her a moment longer than was absolutely necessary, in so painful a state of suspense, and knew that permission to see her husband would greatly relieve her apprehensions. Promising to return as speedily as possible, they set out for Durham House.

Lady Isabella listened most attentively to all the medical gentleman chose to say ; and then, looking at him very anxiously, said,—
“ Now can you, Sir, upon your honour, assure me Mr. Douglas is in no danger ? ”

“ I can safely assure your Ladyship I see no present danger.”

“ Then why all these precautions, Sir ? However, I submit to be guided by your advice, if you will promise I shall see my husband alive in the morning.”

“ Most readily,” replied the surgeon ;—
“ but you must recollect you are to summon all your fortitude, as your agitation would indubitably communicate itself to him ; and
then,

then, upon my word, I can't be answerable for the consequence."

"Can you suppose, Sir, the highest self-gratification would induce me even to run the risk of endangering a life so much dearer to me than my own? Depend upon it I will suppress my sorrow; you shall prepare him to see me, and tell him I only suppose his horse threw him, and broke his collar bone, therefore am wholly unacquainted with his danger, though I know he must submit to a short confinement. Judge of my anxiety to see him, by my even conniving at such a deception; for can I impose a more difficult task upon myself, convinced as I am there is every reason to fear I am upon the point of losing him for ever?"

Grief choaked her utterance as she concluded, and left the room with Mrs. Macpherson, to give a free vent to that sorrow she had promised to suppress in her husband's presence; while the Duke and surgeon returned to inform Douglas how suc-

cessfully they had imposed upon his wife, and to prepare him for the promised interview.

Elton almost started with horror when he perceived the awful change a few hours had made in one of the finest young fellows in England, and dreaded the effect his altered countenance would have upon Lady Isabella; still, after what had passed, it would be in vain to hope they could postpone her visit. They were not allowed to stop many minutes, as Douglas was remarkably low, and seemed disappointed at not seeing his wife, whom he immediately enquired after.

The Duke repeated the concerted story, and told him with difficulty they had prevailed upon her to postpone visiting him till the morning, when the surgeons thought he would be better able to perform his part.— He seemed pleased with what they had done, and was convinced he should be very able to carry on the deception. Sir Charles
slept

slept in the house as well as Mr. Elton ;— and next morning, at the appointed hour, the impatient Lady Isabella and the Duke arrived ; and Douglas having, all things considered, passed what might be termed a very good night, after gently preparing her Ladyship for the astonishing change his short illness had made in her husband, she was conducted to his bed-side. Never were the feelings of two persons more suppressed, from the fear of giving each other pain.— Each made an attempt to smile—it could be called no more ; and her Ladyship in vain endeavoured to restrain her tears, while she gazed upon the pallid cheeks and lips, and hollow eyes of her beloved Douglas, who kissed off the pearly drops as they fell, assuring her he was in no danger, and in very little pain. She affected to believe him, conscious to suppose her in ignorance, made him easier ;—it was not thought prudent they should remain long together, though her Ladyship declared she would not leave the house, and requested her dear Douglas would send for her whenever he wished to see her.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

THE newspapers, and report, having informed the great world what had happened, all the fashionable folks paid Douglas and Lady Isabella the *compliments d'usage* upon such occasions. Fortunately for Lady Dunraven, in a fit of pique against the insensible half-citizen, she had just left London, in her way to Italy, under the escort of the gay Marquis of Beuifort; and thus they both escaped the knowledge of Douglas's encounter, which would certainly have thrown a strange damp upon their promised pleasures. Lord Valmont and Colonel Fraser became constant visitors; nor was John Mackenzie

Mackenzie among the least afflicted upon the occasion. As for her Ladyship, she mainly rejoiced the young fellow had provided sae well for her dear Johnny, sin he was in sitch danger, and acknowledged to her beloved Margaret, as she entertained nae farther hopes from his munificence, and he auways reminded her of the false loon Harcourt, she should nae be sorry if it pleased God to take him.

Margaret was of the same way of thinking, and Sir Archibald, for the same reasons, coincided in his wife's opinion; but neither of them were half so much rejoiced as Archy, who even ventured to hint that the blustering fellow had met with his deserts. As for his adversary being wounded, he thought the report unworthy credit; and at all events, swore he was a brave fellow, and had acted very right in humbling the haughty young jackanapes.

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Her Ladyship, happening to hear him thus displaying his fine feelings, ainly wished some other Irish bully would humble him in the same manner; but sitch worthless wretches as he, were sure to live to a good old age, a burthen to their parents, and often a scandal. By her advice, a very polite note, of her dictating, was dispatched into Grosvenor Square, to express their hopes that the very man would recover they all hoped to hear would soon be laid in state, *ainfi va le monde*.

Meanwhile, Douglas continued in very great danger, and the newspapers placed Lord Fitzcarryl in a similar situation; but the Douglas family was too much taken up with its own misfortunes to bestow a thought upon the author of them, except indeed to execrate his existence. Several days passed before the Faculty could venture to give any decisive opinion of their patient's situation; though they endeavoured to inspire Lady Isabella and the Duke with hopes they hardly dared

dared entertain themselves, of course could not absolutely pronounce Douglas out of danger.

On the eighth day after his accident, the surgeon, who remained behind after the consultation had broke up, told the party assembled in the saloon, that he understood Lord Fitzcarryl was much worse than Mr. Douglas.

“ Indeed !” said Lady Isabella ; “ well, - much as I abhor the very sound of his name, I can’t help wishing he may recover, because I know Douglas would be very sorry to have terminated the existence even of such a man. Besides, what a dreadful shock his death must occasion Albertine, who has certainly been, in many respects, the cause of the horrid duel !”

“ She will be much more shocked if he lives, my Lady,” cried the Count de St. Mars, who had, as usual, breakfasted in the Square, to hear the report of the surgeons.

“ Pray

"Pray don't judge Albertine de Valcarné after your own feelings, Count; though I wish the wretch may recover for her sake; for he will doubtless be completely disfigured, and perhaps lame into the bargain," said Sir Charles.

"Of that there is very little doubt, Sir," replied the surgeon, "I understand from a friend of mine, if nothing worse befalls him; for he is the exact reverse of Mr. Douglas, and does nothing but drink, curse and swear from morning till night."

"Well, if he chuses to kill himself, I think it would be a pity to contradict him," observed Sir Charles; "I only wonder how they contrive to live."

The Duke presumed his Lordship had found credit upon the strength of his marriage; but seriously wondered Albertine had not endeavoured to make friends with her mother, as the note she sent her on the evening of her arrival in town was not very conciliating nor very respectful."

"Oh!

“ Oh! we expect another application from the fair lady hourly,” replied the Count; “ and her clothes are packed ready to be sent the moment she claims them, as Madame de L’Epinois vows she has treated her so ill since her arrival in England, and acted so shamefully in the last instance, that she never will see her again.”

The fears the party still entertained for Douglas gave a change to the conversation, as her Ladyship, notwithstanding the repeated assurances of two physicians, who had been called in, and of the surgeons, could not help persuading herself her husband was in greater danger than ever:—nor was she mistaken; they certainly perceived a crisis coming on, and their more than constant attendance was alone sufficient to alarm the fears they had never been able to remove. Indeed, late in the evening, Dr. W. was obliged to acknowledge a great deal depended upon the ensuing four-and-twenty

twenty hours; and after this confession, nothing he could say was sufficient to remove the dread she began to entertain, that they had lost all hopes, as she knew Douglas had had but very little rest the night before, and had been rather delirious at times during the day.

END OF VOL. III.

